THE EAST-WEST LIBRARY

CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES IN SUFISM



DR. MIR VALIUDDIN

CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES IN SUFISM

archegos

CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES IN SUFISM

Dr Mir Valiuddin MA PhD

Edited by
Dr Gulshan Khakee

East-West Publications
London-The Hague

Printed and bound in Great Britain at
The Camelot Press Ltd, Southampton

Production and design services by Elron Press Ltd., London WC2

Set in Baskerville

ISBN 0 85692 007 X

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Mir Valiuddin
Contemplative disciplines in Sufism.
1. Sufism
I. Title II. Khakee, Gulshan
297'.4 BP189

Contents

		Page
FOREWORD		vi
PREFACE		vii
INTRODUCTION		xi
CHAPTER I	Purification of the Self	1
II	Cleansing of the Heart	11
III	Dhikr and Prayer	31
IV	Methods of Dhikr: The Qādiriyya and Naqshbandiyya Orders	51
V	Methods of Dhikr: The Chishtiyya Order	75
VI	Emptying of the Sirr	93
VII	Emptying of the Sirr: Contemplation in the Naqshbandiyya Order	109
VIII	Illumination of the Spirit	137
BIBLIOGRAPHY		167

Foreword

Much time has passed since Professor Dr Mir Valiuddin submitted his manuscript to the Press. He did not live to see it printed, for he passed away in 1975, when the last touches were given to the manuscript. Since the publisher intended to make the contents available to a great number of non-specialists it was deemed necessary to cut out the copious Arabic, Persian, and Urdu quotations, to print which would have caused much difficulty. Since the number of people in the West who are seriously interested in the problems of Sufism has increased considerably during the last decade we felt that they should not be deprived of the contents of Dr Valiuddin's work due to the language barrier. This was also the reason why the style was sometimes changed, repetitions, as are almost unavoidable, were cut out, so that the book can now be used easily by all those who are interested in the spiritual techniques of Sufism. Dr. Gulshan Khakee, herself trained in the discipline of Comparative Religions and conversant with both the Muslim and the Hindu traditions, has edited the manuscript carefully, and added a bibliography which may help the readers in their further research. The material that has been assembled here has never before been offered to a larger audience of Western readers, and it is to be hoped that it will stimulate a deeper interest in the practices of classical Sufism and also incite scholars to enter more deeply into the field of scholarly study of mystical techniques and their influence on the human mind.

Dr. Annemarie Schimmel
Professor of Indo-Muslim Culture
Harvard University
May 1979

Preface

Dr Mir Valiuddin, who died in 1975, has already made valuable contributions to authentic Sufi literature in English through his books, especially *The Quranic Sufism* (Delhi, 1959) and *Love of God, The Sufi Approach* (Delhi, 1968), and through many articles that have appeared in various journals during the past thirty years. With the present study he makes an important contribution to an aspect of Sufism which has received little attention until now. The official Orientalists, unaware for the most part of the techniques and methods of Sufism, have been in no position to make a meaningful study of spiritual techniques the like of which were lost in the West a long time ago and only now are being avidly sought after in the Eastern Traditions. As for the occultists and pseudo-spiritualists, whose number increases every day with the weakening of the spiritual forces in the West, they have spoken of spiritual techniques and in fact have of late invaded the field of Sufism after adulterating for some time Hinduism and Buddhism. But because they are not traditional and orthodox in the true sense of these words—and have no respect for the Sacred Law or *Sharī'a*, which alone can make possible even the first step upon the Path—they speak in a vacuum. They offer techniques of meditation and contemplation which at best may be of only minor harm and at worst can lead men into madness and demonic states of consciousness. It is, therefore, especially welcome that the present book is devoted to Sufi disciplines from the point of view of Sufism itself and presented by one who has spent a life-time in their study and practice, one who is immersed in these disciplines himself.

The exposition of the author is the fruit of the long tradition of Sufism as it has existed over the centuries and as it has manifested itself in the Arabic, Persian and Urdu literatures. The pages of the

book are replete with quotations from the rich poetry of all of these languages, especially Persian, which for centuries was as much a cultural language of the Indian sub-continent as of Persia itself. The beauty of the book lies most of all in the well-chosen verses—some of celestial beauty—which can be fully appreciated only in the original. It is understandable that in this book, for several reasons, only the translations into English of these verses can be given. The very rich selection presented in these pages demonstrates the author's immense learning and his close acquaintance with Sufism and its literature in the several languages mentioned above.

The vast number of citations which have been abridged in this edited edition of the original manuscript for economic reasons, also demonstrates the organic link which exists between the Koran and *Ḥadīth* and early Sufi Poetry in Arabic and the vast treasures of Persian and later Urdu Sufi poetry. These mystical literatures are like so many streams which flow forth from the gushing spring of inspiration deriving from the Holy Koran.

The great virtue of this book is in fact to start by ascertaining categorically the Koranic origin of Sufism.[1] To have shown that the practice of Sufism is essentially the emulation of the life and practice of the Holy Prophet and its goal the true knowledge or *ma'rifa* of the message of the Holy Koran that can be summarized in the majestic quintessence of all metaphysics, namely, *Lā ilāha ill Allāh* is already to have rendered a great service to the cause of Islam and to Sufism. For this affirmation will at least keep away the would-be pretender who, not being serious enough to accept the discipline implied in the *Sharī'a* of Islam, wishes to practise Sufism as an extraneous element that has been grafted on to the body of Islam and has somehow survived to modern times just awaiting occultists who, thinking that they know Sufism better than the Sufis themselves, can plunder its riches.

The long introduction to the book, replete with quotations from leading authorities of Sufism throughout the ages, makes clear the meaning of Sufism, its relation to the *Sharī'a*, the position of some of the great intellectual figures of Islam towards it, and the reason for the opposition of some of the very esoteric elements in Islamic society against it.

In the eight chapters that follow, the author outlines the stages of the spiritual path (*sulūk*), which consist essentially of the purification of different levels of the microcosmic being, the *nafs*, the *qalb* and the *sirr*, and finally the illumination of the spirit by Divine Light

resulting in the gnosis which is the end and goal of the Sufi path. Moreover, the stages of the Path are delineated according to the teachings of the three major Sufi orders of the sub-continent: the Qādiriyya, the Naqshbandiyya and the Chistiyya. The description of the fundamental technique of invocation (*dhikr*) with numerous citations from Sufi texts in both prose and poetry remains central throughout these chapters. Of particular interest is the description of the silent invocation of the Naqshbandiyya.

The author states clearly his preference for the 'way of love' of the Chishtiyya, following what he has expressed in his previous works. It must be made clear, however, that the love stressed here should not be confused with the 'way of love' known to the post-medieval West, which is usually seen as separated or even opposed to the way of knowledge. In Islam love and knowledge can never be totally separated. Each Sufi order only stresses one without ever denying the other. In fact Sufi love (*'ishq*) is understood by Sufis as the realized aspect of gnosis. The purest metaphysics, if it remains only theoretical, is little as compared with its realization in the soul of man. This realization is called *'ishqi*, it is a love that is wedded to gnosis and leads to Unity or *tawḥīd*, which is situated above all duality, even the duality existing between the lover and the Beloved. That is why the 'poet of the Invisible World' (*lisān al-ghayb*) Hafiz writes:

> The men of intellect (those who possess theoretical knowledge) are like the central point of the compass of existence. But Love (*'ishq*) knows that they are lost wandering in this circle.

The exposition of Dr Valiuddin has the virtue of both depicting the contours of this circle of existence and indicating how through the stages of spiritual realization man can reach that realized gnosis which sees every formulation as but a key to the understanding of the Truth which in essence is infallible and remains above all formulations.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr
Tehran
March 1979

Note

The publisher of this book had the very great pleasure to meet the author on one of his travels through India and as a result of a discussion with the author he was asked to publish this manuscript which for various reasons could not be produced earlier. It is much

regretted that due to his death Dr Valiuddin has not seen the publication of his manuscript which no doubt was dear to his heart. It is hoped however that in the heavenly worlds he will know that this book of his has now been given form and will no doubt give more light to many on the spiritual path.

1. Fortunately in the last few years such serious and genuine expositors of Sufism in the West as F. Schuon in his masterly *Understanding Islam* (London, 1963), T. Burckhardt in his *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Lahore, 1959) and M. Lings, *A Muslim Saint of the Twentieth Century* (London, 1961) have shown with blinding evidence the Koranic and Islamic origin of Sufism, but unfortunately, for certain types of blindness no evidence is of any use no matter how blinding it might be. See also S. H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Cambridge (USA), 1964), Chapter III.

Introduction

In the following pages an attempt has been made to enunciate the contemplative disciplines in Sufism as practised by the great Sufis and eminent Shaykhs. But before we proceed to do this, let us understand the exalted position that the Sufis occupy in the community of the Muslims—'men chosen and elect, excellent and pre-eminent'. As Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī[1] has said about them:

> Their feet were firm, their understandings clean, their beacons were bright: they had understanding of God, and journeyed unto God, and turned away from what is other than God. Their lights pierced the veils . . . and their eyes were blind to all beneath the Throne. They were spiritual bodies . . . silent and meditative, absent from men but present with God, kings in rags . . . possessors of all virtues and lights of all guidance; their ears attentive, their hearts pure, their qualities concealed; chosen, illuminated, pure.

Abū Yazīd said:

> The Sufis are children in the lap of God.

Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn said:

> There is in every community a chosen band, and they are the agents of God, concealed by Him from His creation; if there be any such in this community, they are the Sufis.

Dhū'n-Nūn[2] said:

> I saw a woman in one of the coasts of Syria and said to her, 'Whence comest thou (God have mercy on thee)?' She replied, 'From people whose flanks shrink from beds.' I said, 'And whither intendest thou?' She answered, 'Unto them whom neither merchandise, nor selling diverts from remembrance of God'[3] I said, 'Describe them.'

Then she began to recite:

Their every purpose is with God united,
Their high ambitions mount to Him alone:
Their troth is to the Lord and Master plighted –
O noble quest, for the Eternal One!

They do not quarrel over this world's pleasure –
Honours, and children, rich and costly gowns,
All greed and appetite! They do not treasure
The life of ease and joy that dwells in towns.

Facing the far and faint horizon yonder
They seek the Infinite, with purpose strong:
They ever tread where desert runnels wander,
And high on towering mountain-tops they throng![4]

Perhaps this will suffice to give an idea of the high rank of the Sufis in the Muslim community.

Now let us record a few of the Traditions of the Prophet of Islam about Sufism. Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib relates, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, that the Prophet said:

> Verily, a part of knowledge is after something hidden; it is only known by those who are acquainted with God. When they speak about it, it is disapproved of by those who are heedless of God.

The following narrative goes back to 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd:

> I asked al-Hasan about the science of the Inward, and he said, 'I asked Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman about the science of the Inward, and he said, "I asked the Messenger of God about the science of the Inward, and he said 'I asked Gabriel about the science of the Inward, and he said, "I asked God about the science of the Inward, and He said, 'It is a secret of My secrets; I set it in the heart of my servant, and none of My creatures understands it.' '[5]

Abū 'l-Ḥasan ibn Abī Dharr quotes the following verses of al-Shiblī in his book, the *Minhāj ad-Dīn*:

The science of the Sufis has no bound,
A science high, celestial, divine:
In it the Masters have plunged profound,
And men of wit appraise them by that sign.

We will amplify the statements made above in order to understand the position of the Sufis and the nature and value of their teachings.

'Allāma Quṭb ad-Dīn Shīrāzī[6] has given a true picture of the Sufis

and their work. He says that the Messenger of God (God's blessings and peace be upon him) has said:

> The *'ulamā* (the learned class) of my people are like the prophets of the sons of Israel.

This means that the *'ulamā* of the Muslim community are like the prophets of the sons of Israel in knowing the path to God and leading men towards it. He has also said:

> The *'ulamā* are the heirs to the prophets.

The heritage of the prophets is the Proximity of God. Attainment unto God is possible, firstly, by acquiring the knowledge imparted by the *Sharī'a* (sacred law). This knowledge teaches us how to discharge the obligations imposed upon us in connection with the service, worship and adoration of God and also in relation to our fellow beings. When we discharge our duties in strict accordance with the dictates of the *Sharī'a*, we are led on the way to attainment unto God which ultimately leads us to the *spring whence those brought near to God drink.*[7]

In the same way, 'Proximity to God' is attained by acquiring the knowledge of the 'Path of God', *'ilm at-Ṭarīqa*. It teaches us to cultivate that mental state which is the result of the attainment of angelic qualities,[8] and of the purification of the appetitive self from its blamable animal attributes and purging it of its depravity, and of the cleansing of the heart from the love of the ephemeral world, from its leaning towards the worldlings and its vainglorious thoughts and making it the object of Divine Effulgence. In this way heart and soul and self are prepared for the attainment unto God.

Again, the 'Proximity of God' is attained by acquiring the *'ilm al-Ḥaqīqa*, 'knowledge of the Truth'. It consists of the gnosis of the Names and Attributes of God[9] and teaches us how to actualize or realize them in ourselves. 'Gnosis' in the words of Fāris 'absorbs the gnostic in the essence of the Object of his gnosis'.

Thus, according to Shīrāzī, the Sufi shaykhs tread on the paths of *Sharī'a* (the Sacred Law), *Ṭarīqa* (the Path) and *Ḥaqīqa* (the Truth) and they establish true relationship with the Prophets by their knowledge, words, deeds and *aḥwāl* or 'mystic states'. This is not done by the formalists among the *'ulamā*, the 'learned class'.

Another eminent scholar, who is considered among those 'who are firmly grounded in knowledge', 'Allāma Jalāl ad-Dīn Dawwānī, says in his *Sharḥ-i Rubā'iyāt*:

> Formal sciences do not lead us to Reality; but that which directs us to it is, after Divine blessing, the company of, or intimate association with the "inward" men of the Path and devotion to these ecstatics.

Though the methods of argumentation or reasoning resolve many difficulties and remove many obstacles, those who aspire after Reality find no peace or bliss by these methods. As the great Sufi al-Ḥallāj has said:

> Who seeks God, and takes the intellect for guide,
> God drives him forth, in vain distraction to abide:
> With wild confusion He confounds his inmost heart,
> So that, distraught, he cries, 'I know not if Thou art'.[10]

This can be seen from the writings of some of those great scholars who were first engaged in the study of formal sciences and spent a great part of their life in argumentation, methodical reasoning and debate, but could not achieve their goal. So they left this way of seeking Reality and took to seclusion, privacy and avoidance of intercourse with people. Such was Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111)[11] who has related his own story in his book *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalāl* and other works.

Similarly, Hamadhānī has dwelt on this subject in *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq* where he says:

> For the seeker of the purification of the inward, the society of and association with men of direct intuitive knowledge is of immense value. By men of direct intuitive knowledge I mean those singular men who have purified their hearts from all vices and to whom the benignity and grace of God reveal things that cannot be described in words. The felicity of the seeker lies in the devoted services of those saints who are dead to themselves and entirely lost in God, becoming one spirit with Him in all respects. When they thus spent their lives in ardent love of God and devoted service to Him, God grants them a sweet, clean, happy, good life. The learned men of the formalist type know nothing except the outward form or impress of Reality.
>
> If you desire to realise Truth:
> Refrain from debates and discussions as genuine seekers do.
> Keep company with Friends of God and mingle with them,
> May be that you soar high with their wings.

And again:

> We indulged in academic discussions endless,
> But failed to solve the mysteries of the universe.

Though several knots have been disentangled,
Nothing is known about the Hereafter!

The eminent Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahāb Sha'rānī writes in his work *Irshād at - Ṭalabah wa'l-Murīdīn:*

> One should know that the Way of the Sufis is the only straight way, the clear and upright way. Ways are sought for the advantages gained in following them, and the way of the Sufis is the way of the exact gnosis of God, and of knowledge of the diverse ways of self training necessary for the gnosis of God. And everybody knows that the gnosis of God is the highest and the noblest of all knowledge, because the object of this knowledge is the Most Excellent Being. That is why the way of gnosis of God is the most excellent of all ways and one who guides us towards this end is the master of all guides and the most perfect of them all. And the traveller of this path is the most blessed of all travellers . . . Hence, one who would like to admonish or give good counsel to his own self should follow this path only, giving up all other paths. For this is the path of felicity and bliss which comprises of both the sciences of *Sharī'a* and *Ṭarīqa*. The gnostic of this path is the perfect adept and the true heir to the Inheritance of the Prophets. He is called the *Universal Man* or the Perfect Master.
>
> Further, it should be noted that as the stage attained by following this path is the most excellent and felicitous one, the path itself is hard to travel, being replete with trials and tribulations; and one who treads this path is really a brave man who holds the hand of his spiritual preceptor firmly and marches on boldly towards the ultimate end. It is incumbent on the preceptor to pay due attention to the training of the disciple, and it is incumbent on the disciple to follow the instructions of his preceptor whole-heartedly.

The eminent Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd Bukhārī, known as Khwāja Pārsā Naqshbandī says:

> The Shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqa* ('path') are the leaders of all men of true religion and belief. They have acquired for themselves all the inward and outward aspects of knowledge. They are men of feeling (*arbāb-i aḥwāl*) and perfect masters. Their beliefs are based on true principles and are supported by the Holy Koran, the Traditions of the Prophet, the agreement of all Muslims and rational arguments. They are also *ahl-i dil* 'men of heart', inward men who look through the veil. God Almighty has turned towards

them with benignty and sufficient Grace and has attracted them towards Himself and for whom 'the good (record) from us has gone before' and 'made them stick close to the command of self restraint, and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it'. They have received their knowledge from God, and have devoted themselves to His service alone, to the complete exclusion of all else, their light has torn asunder all the veils and their hearts have moved around the Throne of God. They are men of inflexible purpose, stout of heart, elect among the believers. They are a light for the seekers of God. They exterminate false pretensions and innovations; they are proof as it were for the people of the *ahl-i Sunna* or the 'approved way'. God in His wisdom and Mercy has revealed the light of their saintship among the believers so that they may be blessed and benefit by them. *For such God has written faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself.*[12] Those who oppose them are spiritually dead as they do not perceive.

Imām Ghazzālī,[13] in his work *al-Munqidh min aḍ-Ḍalāl*, after mentioning the early stages of his life, says:

Many secrets and mysteries have been revealed to me in these seclusions and privacy with God which cannot be recounted here. I shall relate only those which I think may benefit the readers of this treatise. With a heartfelt certainty I came to believe that the eminent Sufis alone are the veracious travellers on the Path of God and their disposition, manners and habits alone are superior to all others. Their way alone is the straight way. Their natural disposition and morals are the best . . . This is so because all their outward actions and inward states are irradiated by the light of the lamp of prophecy, and there is not on the face of the earth any other light from which illumination should be sought.

In short the very first condition of this Holy way is the overcoming of the appetites of the flesh and getting rid of its evil dispositions and vile qualities, so that the heart may be cleared of all but God; and the means of clearing it is *dhikr-e Allah*, i.e. the commemoration of God and concentration of every thought upon Him. And the last stage of this way is complete effacement in God—the naughting of all that is not God and persisting through what belongs to God. Who can find fault with such a way?

That which we have described as the last stage of Sufism is not really the last one. It is last in the sense that what is achieved by painfully treading the *via purgativa* by self remonstrance and self abnegation is this stage. As a matter of fact, this is only the first stage of the Path to God. What proceeded before this stage was only a threshold for the seeker. It is a way in which in its very first stage *mukāshafas* or 'unveilings' come to the disciples; while

awake they see angels and souls of prophets, hear their voices and gain from their guidance.[14] Then their *ḥāl* 'state' passes from the beholding of forms to stages where language fails and any attempt to express what is experienced must involve some error. They reach a proximity to God which some have fancied to be *ḥulūl*, 'fusion of being', others *ittiḥād* 'identification' and others *wuṣūl* or 'union'. But all these are erroneous ways of indicating the thing. In our book *al-maqṣad al-Aqṣā* we have explained where the error lies . . .

Unless a man has felt in himself some part of this matter *i.e.* of the highest mystical states, he knows nothing of Prophecy as it really is, except the name. The miraculous gifts of the Sufi saints are the first things that happen to the Prophets. Such was the case with Muḥammad, (may the peace of God be upon him) at the outset, when he retired to Mount Ḥira to be alone with God and gave himself up to devotion. At this the Arabs began to whisper among themselves that Muḥammad had fallen in love with his Lord.

This is the state which is known only to those men of taste and ecstacy, the *ahl-i dhauq* who have traversed the path. Those who have not experienced this joy may come to know of it by experience or from hearing about it from the 'men of feeling'. And this is possible only when they associate with them for a long time. He who keeps company with these people will attain to this state and faith. They (the *ahl-i dhauq*) are people whose associates are never disappointed. Those to whom this bliss of personal experience has not been granted may believe in it through rational proof or 'demonstration' *burhān*, as we have shown in our book *Iḥyā 'Ulūm ad-Dīn*, in the chapter on *'Ajā'ib al-Qulūb* or 'Mysteries of the Heart'.

To describe this mystic state in words and support it by arguments and proof is called knowledge, to acquire it by experience and practice is called *dhauq* ('taste') and to form an opinion about it and believe it implicitly is faith. These are the three stages.

As the Koran says:

> God will raise up to suitable ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) knowledge.[15]

As opposed to them are the ignorant people who do not know it and therefore deny and disavow it. It is about them that the Koran has said

> And among them are men who listen to thee, but in the end when they go out from thee, they say to those who have received

knowledge 'What is it he said just then?' Such are men whose hearts God has sealed, and who follow their own lusts.[16]

The effect of such knowledge is thus expressed by an ecstatic:

The wine of love has filled my heart and soul,
And erased my name from the board of the living!
I have heard from Thee words as sweet as honey,
Today these very words have sunk deep into my heart.

It is said that Imām Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzi asked Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn Kubrā: 'How did you attain unto the gnosis of God?' He replied: 'By *wāridāt* "mystic experience" which the heart cannot falsely deny.'

Another adept has expressed the high position of the mystics in these following words:

Purifiers of heart are indifferent to colour or odour,
They witness beauty every moment without break!
They have forsaken the outward emblem of knowledge,
And picked up the crux which they behold with the eye of certainty.
They have acquired zest, contemplation and ecstasy,
And dived into the sea in search of their Beloved!
Death which strikes terror in the heart of others,
They laugh at it when they face it.
None can influence their heart,
As the pearl is safe though the shell may be broken!
Unmindful of letters, they have clung to the spirit,
And in seeking God they have effaced themselves in His Being!
Soaring above space and the emblems of Divinity,
They have secured a seat in the Assembly of the Near Ones.
They are entirely lost in God, wafted away from the plane of self-consciousness
And behold the Glory of God and hundreds of signs bear testimony to this fact.

Shaykh Ḍia ad-Dīn Abū Najīb Suhrawardī (d. 1168) in his book *Adāb al-Murīdīn* says:

. . . The Sufis distinguished themselves by acquiring more exalted knowledge and spiritual states and stages, as for example, repentance, renunciation or abstinence, continence, patience, acquiescence, trust in God, love, contemplation (or vision of Truth), firm certainty, contentment, sincerity, pure and undefiled faith, thankfulness or gratitude, remembrance or commemoration of God, meditation, ecstacy, unity, diversity, passing away from self[17] and persistence or abiding after passing away, *fanā* and *baqā* . . .

Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn 'Umar Suhrawardī (d. 1234) has praised the eminent Sufis thus:

> Their heart was full of love for God, and effulgent with His Holy Light; their outward and inward life was governed by righteousness and piety; in the darkness and gloom of human nature they lit the lamp of firm certainty; they attached no importance to the sensuous pleasures of the world; they disliked those who followed their lusts; they scaled the heights of hope and fear, traversed the world of Domain or *'ālam-i malakūt*; they fixed their gaze on the sublime Lights; they regarded even the angels as story-tellers and attained the Proximity of God. Their bodies were earthly but their hearts were heavenly; their spirits secured a seat in the Assembly of the Near Ones; they served God as His slaves or bondsmen. The ignorant think that they have lost their way. As a matter of fact, they never lost their way but they concealed their (mystic) states and the ignorant could not perceive them. Outwardly they existed with their bodies in the external world, but they were separated from it as far as their hearts were concerned. Their spirits moved round the Throne of the Creator . . . In the darkness of night they got delight by their devotion and due to the intensity of their yearning for God they got pleasure from the thirst of midday . . Due to their prayers they mastered their lusts and lascivious passions and due to the high pleasure they derived from reading the Koran they did not care for sensuous pleasures. Their faces emitted the light of their hearts . . .

Mīr Hūsayn ibn Mu'īn Maibudhī says in his book *Fawātiḥ* as follows:

> In the Path of the Sufis one finds Divine Light, perpetual self-manifestation of God and the gnosis of the ultimate reality of all things phenomenal:
>
> Sufism is knowledge known to those only who have
> A religious frame of mind and are inspired by God,
> He can never know it who does not witness it,
> How can a blind person behold the light of the sun?

Further, he expresses his repentance thus:

> From the moment I was initiated into the Way of the Sufis,
> I have been repenting for my past life.
> Having given up formal relationship
> I find myself flooded with delight and happiness.

Their faces emitted the light of their hearts and what was concealed in their hearts perfected the way of the gnostics. In every age such persons of cognitive attainment through mystic efforts exist and they invite people unto God. Due to this high

position they are assigned the task of summoning people to the approved way of God and they are regarded as leaders in religion. They have left their traces in the world and their lights will bring peace and joy to troubled minds and dispel the darkness of ingorance of time to come. Those who follow them will be led on the right path and those who ignore or disavow them will go astray from the right path.

Mullā 'Alī 'Arī writes in his book, *Sharḥ-i Ādāb al-Murīdīn*, that Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn as-Suhrāwardī told him that

> In the beginning I was engaged in the study of *'Ilm al-kalām* (the science of scholastic theology) and had memorized many text-books on this subject. My uncle used to prohibit me and I never paid any attention to what he said. One day he intended to pay a visit to Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1166 A.D) and I also accompanied him. My uncle said to me: 'Keep a watch over your heart! You are going in the presence of a person who has direct communication with his Lord and wait for the blessing of a single glance from him!' When we were seated, my uncle addressing the Shaykh said: 'My Lord! this boy is the son of my brother, and desires ardently to study *'Ilm-al-Kalām*. I prohibited him from this unfruitful work, but my words failed to produce any effect on his mind'. The Shaykh asked me: 'What are the books you have memorized?' I enumerated them. He just passed his hand over my breast in order to wipe it, and by God! I could not remember even the name of any one of these books which I had committed to memory for such a long period of my life and my breast was filled with Divine knowledge, knowledge of the mysteries, knowledge of the unseen. I parted from him with a 'lofty tongue of truth' and a true and sincere heart. The Shaykh said: 'O, 'Umar, you will be the last famous person of Irān.' And this was what happened. Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn was admittedly regarded as the Shaykh of all the Shaykhs of his age. The door of firm certainty was opened in the heart of Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn just because he had full faith in the saints and friends of God.

He was much prejudiced against the Sufis and the Hanafis. But when he associated with the Sufis, he got convinced of the truth of the Sufi Path and also praised Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (d.-767). He used to say: 'We wasted our life in dealing in vanities.' Jāmī has expressed this idea thus:

> O heart! Thy high prized learning of the schools,
> Geometry and metaphysics lore,
> Yea, all but love of God is devil's love:
> Fear God and leave this love to fools.

After learning the mysteries of Sufism, Ghazzālī wrote such books as *al-Munqidh min aḍ-Ḍalāl* (The Rescuer from Error), *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (The Niche of Lights) and *Iḥyā 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* (Revivification of Religious Sciences) and dived deep into the mysteries of the Sufis and investigated the problems dealt in Sufism, for example, the problem of the Unity of Being, audition (*samā'*) etc. Some of his contemporaries severely censured his views, and some pronounced him as an unbeliever. His book *Iḥyā* was burnt to ashes. Then, God Almighty came to his rescue and the same book was written again in golden letters.

But we concede that sometimes an extravagant heretic appears in the form of an unitarian and a free thinker, *zindīq*, in the guise of a veracious believer or *ṣiddīq*. It is hard for a seeker of God to distinguish between the two and he is bewildered.[18] That is why Ḥāfiz of Shirāz has warned us:

> Not every one who adorns his exterior knows the ways of the Beloved,
> Nor can every manufacturer of mirrors become a *Sikander*,
> There are a thousand and one delicate aspects (as the human hair) of this question
> Mere shaving of the head does not make one a real *Qalander*
> My hat off to the Divine Energy of the perfect Man who cares not for himself,
> Every pretender does not know the art of alchemy!

We have been plainly admonished by Ḥāfiz that:

> Not every Sufi's attainments are free from blemishes
> There are some cloaks which deserve to be burnt!

And again Ḥāfiz says:

> A group claims to be on the right path,
> And to have found safety by donning the robes of adepts,
> If eminence consists in putting on felt head-gear,
> We, too, have the same stuff!

On the other hand it has been said:

> Perfect men are sometimes found in rags,
> Men of heart, *ahl-i dil*, are betimes clad in coarse wool! . . .[19]

The real life of these martyrs is sustained from the ineffable Presence and Nearness of God. The Sufis attain unto this Proximity of God in their life on earth, and that is the real cause of the perpetual

endurance of their fame, remembrance and commemoration even after they are received by God. As it has been said:

> These are the people who are (outwardly) dead but they are alive among mankind.[20]

Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī, whom we have mentioned above, further states:

> The Sufis are those inmates of God, those perfect persons whom the Koran calls *fuqarā* (those in want of God), and not those who merely in form or figure distinguish themselves from others. Only those adepts who have attained the Proximity of God are called by the travellers of the Path as *Sufis*.

Al-Junayd[21] defined the Sufi as a person 'dead to his own self and alive in God'.

When Abū Muḥammad Ruwaym was asked to define Sufism, he said:

> Sufism is nothing else save submitting one's own self to the Will of God.

Abū Muḥammad al-Jūrayrī has said:

> Sufism is the building up of good habits and the keeping of the heart from all evil desires and passions.

CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES

Having learnt something about the exalted position of the Sufis in the Muslim community let us now study, in fuller detail, the contemplative disciplines a *sālik* 'seeker after God' has to pass through to attain unto his ultimate end. As laid down by the great Sufis and the eminent Shaykhs, he has to pass through certain stages, *madārij*, and experience certain states, *aḥwāl*. After cleansing the body, as laid down by the *Sharī'a*, there appear to be four main stages:

1. *Tadhkiya-i Nafs* or 'Purification of the self'. This means cleansing the sensual self from its vile, blameable, animal propensities and embellishing it with laudable and angelic attributes (Chapter I).

2. *Taṣfiya-i Qalb* or 'Cleansing of the heart'. This means the erasing from the heart its love for the ephemeral world and its worry over griefs and sorrow, and establishing in their place an ardent love for God alone (Chapters II, V).

3. *Takhliya-i Sirr* or 'Emptying of the *Sirr*' from all thoughts that

would divert attention from the remembrance of God (Chapters VI, VII).

4. *Tajliya-i Rūḥ* or 'Illumination of the Spirit'. This means filling the spirit with the effulgence of God and the fervour of His Love (Chapter VIII).

Passing through these disciplines the Sufis have attained *mā'rifa* ('gnosis') and Reality was revealed to them.

There appears some difference of approach among the various Orders of the Sufis, but there is none in the spiritual concentration required. There may be diversity in dealing with the manifold forms of manifestation, but they are all at one in the realization of the Reality behind them.

THE GREAT SUFI ORDERS

The Qādiriyya Order

The Sufis of the *Qādiriyya Order* emphasize the emptying of the *'Sirr'* from all thoughts other than God and the purification of self from all blameable animal and satanic qualities. They maintain that the human spirit has come from the 'World of Command' (*'ālam al-amr*) and is capable of reflecting the Divine Effulgence. But, due to the impurities of self it does not do so. For instance, when the mirror becomes rusty it cannot reflect any form placed in front of it, but, when the rust is removed, it begins to reflect clearly. This is what Sa'dī had advised the Sālik:

> Sa'dī! There is no veil if your heart is pure;
> A rusty mirror cannot reflect clearly the face of your beloved.
> (Chapters 1, 6, 7)

The Naqshbandiyya Order

The Sufis of the *Naqshbandiyya Order* lay much emphasis on 'Contemplation'. They hold that the human spirit, as such, is devoid of all forms, but if you fill it with a form, it will have no room left for other forms. Now, to attain Reality one has to concentrate on Reality, uninfluenced by any aspect of the surrounding phenomenal world and engage all the powers of thought, imagination and perception to accomplish this task. That is why they prohibit the Sālik from listening to *Samā' (audition), or doing the remembrance of God loudly ('dhikr-bi'l Jahr')*. This, they regard as a 'vain search for the invisible' (*ghaib-bāzī*) for the job is to discover the Reality in ourselves. As Ḥaḍrat Khwāja Khūrd has stated 'Darwishi is nothing but

right-thinking'. Jāmī, eulogizing the Sufis of the Naqshbandiyya Orders, says:

> The Naqshbandiyya are a wonderful set of leaders,
> They take the Caravan to the Sanctuary through a Secret path.

The Sufis of this Order base their view on Tradition, related in *Mishkāt*, in which the Prophet of Islam has advised Ibn 'Abbās thus:

> Oh, young men, keep God always in view, God
> will keep you in view
> Oh, boy, keep God always in view, you will
> find God before you!

That is why, they consider 'Yād dāsht' to be the most important method in *Sulūk*. This method means, 'Concentration upon the Divine Presence without the aid of words or ideas'. (Chapter VII).

The Chishtiyya Order

For the Sufis of the *Chishtiyya Order*, the most important thing is the love of God. This is how they explain it. When a person falls in love with somebody, he keeps on thinking of his beloved incessantly, and every moment his longing for him grows more intense. Similar is the case of the Real love, or the Love of God. To create this love, the Sufis of this Order advise 'Loud, or Vociferous remembrance of God' (*dhikr-bil-jahr*). It increases the heat of the heart and in turn generates love for God. They also advise listening to *Samā* under strict conditions. Their writings are full of ardour, fervour and ardent love of God. One of them has said very plainly:

> None but the elegant are slaughtered on the altar of love,
> The ill-tempered and weak natured are just let off.
> Do not escape being slain, if thou art a true lover,
> He who is not slaughtered is just dead meat.

In my opinion, it is by Love alone that the *Sālik* attains to all the high stages of *sulūk* (the Path to God) e.g. Self effacement, subsistence in God, the sense of the perpetual Presence of God. It is love by which self-hood is naughted, human limitations are removed and direct observation of Reality is made possible. It is by love alone that immutability after perishability, life after life's loss and eternal existence after extinction are obtained. Like a moth the lover throws himself on the Flame of the Beloved's Beauty and burns out his temporal and contingent being. The Beloved, then, consoles the lover thus:

In the flame of love burn thy wings and feathers,
And fear not — they will, surely, be replaced.

And the lover, with deep humility, sings thus:

Imagine me talking of life before Thee! What cheek!
And narrating interesting tales to Thee! What cheek!
A formless king has decorated the world,
And I am talking of forms and symbols! What cheek!
When eternal light has spread over the entire universe,
I am just worrying about this small planet! What cheek!
In a bargain which is the source of all bliss,
I am talking in terms of profit and loss! What cheek!
When all stars have disappeared in the light of sun,
I am relating the story of this earth! What cheek!
When the highest moment in human history is considered of no importance,
I am talking shop before Thee, what cheek!

Then, in accordance with the approved practice,

Then We withdraw it unto Us, a gradual withdrawal
(S.XXV, 46)

the Beloved draws the distracted lover to Himself! This mystic state has thus been depicted by an ecstatic:

He pulled the lover closer to Himself by a pulling stroke of love,
This pull is far better than the combined worship of the jinn and humankind.
Said He: 'Thou gavest up ephemeral existence,
Now, thou hast been endowed with everlasting life!
Happy is the time when a lover embraces his Beloved,
And cuts himself away from the rest!'

The lover now drinks the intoxicating wine of the Beloved's Beauty so much that every particle of his being is inebriated and in ecstasy he begins to eulogise the wine thus:

I was spoon-fed with the wine of gnosis.
My intellect was intoxicated.
But, when I sipped it on my own, I began to comprehend:
I was enveloped by the dazzling light of a million suns,
I was effaced and I was addressed in this state
By the Eternal, the Knowing, the Seeing, the Irresistible
All veils were lifted and I saw Him plainly,
With the eyes of truth which no veils can hide
I attained my goal though my existence was naughted,
And nothing remained there except the Reality.

Now, the lover has found the Beloved, the seeker the Sought, the observer the Observed. The quest is completed, disquietude is removed!

> Nothing remained there except the Reality; the lender and the borrower both disappeared!
> There was no trace of those who have attained their goal nor was any one seen parting company.
> There is ample evidence of the fact that
> None saw Reality except Reality!

This mystic state is depicted by an ecstatic thus:

> When Reality reveals itself
> None is present except Reality Itself,
> Though thousands of forms may be visible,
> Really there is none in between!
> I cannot locate a drop,
> When I see a boundless ocean surging.
> There is no end to this story,
> It is, thus, best to give it up.

In the following pages you will find these mystic states and stages elucidated to the extent that it is possible to explain them.

Acknowledgments. I wish to acknowledge my deep gratitude to my brother, Dr Mir Siadat Ali Khan, MA, LLB, Fazel (Osm); BCL (Oxon); DPhil (Oxon); Bar-at-Law (Lincoln's Inn); Erstwhile Professor of Law and Fellow of the Osmania University and to my friend, Mr Mohammad Siddiq, MA (Osm), who read this work in manuscript and have made valuable suggestions.

NOTES

1. *The Doctrine of the Sufis (Kitāb al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab al-tasawwuf)*, translated from the Arabic of Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi by Arthur John Arberry, Cambridge University Press, 1935.
2. Dhū'n-Nūn was a prominent Egyptian Sufi who died in 859 A.D.
3. Koran, sura XXIV, 37.
4. A. J. Arberry, *op. cit.* p. 10–11.
5. *Ibid.* p. 76.

6. Shirazi's work is *Durrat al-Tāj*. We quote it from *Kitāb Raud al-Azhar fi Ma'āthir al-Qalandar* by Shah 'Ali Qalander, Rampur Press, 1339 A.H. p. 52–3.
7. Koran, sura LXXXIII, 128.
8. The Sufi way is said to be the way of constant purification, at various levels: from the lower qualities and turpidities of the soul, from the bondage of human qualities, and eventually on the level of attributes. The Prophet has said: 'Qualify yourselves with the qualities of God'. This means that one should substitute the noble qualities as found in the perfection in the Lord for one's own low qualities until one is completely spiritualized. *See* note 9.
9. This is a reference to the *asmā al-husnā* or the 'Ninety-nine beautiful names'. Islam proposes that the finite human intellect is incapable of knowing the divine, except in so far as God tells us. And to the Muslim, God has spoken in the Koran. One of the ways in which the divine is spoken of in the Koran is the Ninety-nine Names, which are really attributes.
10. *Diwan d'al-Hallāj*, ed. Massignon, 1931.
11. A great thinker and theologian, later turned to Sufism.
12. Koran, LVIII, 22.
13. *See* note 11,
14. *Cf. The Play of Consciousness* or *Chitshakti Vilas* of Swami Muktananda, a great Siddha Yogi of our time.
15. Koran, LVIII, 2.
16. Koran, XLVII, 16.
17. This refers to the passing away of the ego-hood. Different stages and their corresponding states are slightly differently enumerated by different schools.
18. Similar is the case of the multiplication of gurus and spiritual teachers in the modern west!
19. *Fawati Khamsah* by Mir Husayn ibn Muin-ud-Din Maibadhi, MS. in Asafiyya Library, Hyderabad, India.
20. Lings, Martin, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad Al-'Alawi*, California University Press, 1971, 65.
21. Al-Junayd is the famous Sufi mystic of Baghdad who died in 910 A.D. He insisted that the ultimate goal of the mystic is God himself, and not the titillation of the emotions in self-induced ecstasy; he admits ecstatic experiences of a high degree, yet insists on 'sobriety' and the mark of the true, realized Sufi.
22. *Fawātih Khamsah* by Mir Husayn ibn Mu'in-ud-Din Maibadhi, Manuscript in Asafiyya Library, Hyderabad, India.

CHAPTER I

Purification of the Self: Tadhkiya-i Nafs

Unless thou burnest, thou canst not give off the smell of incense,
The mature know it, we are not speaking of the immature.

Sufism speaks of advancement in spiritual life as *sulūk* and the seeker after God as a *sālik* or 'traveller'. The literal meaning of *sulūk* is to tread the path, which is a physical act and may be regarded as movement in space. In the technical sense however, by *sulūk* is meant 'spiritual journeying' and not movement in space.

The *sulūk* of the *nafs*, the sensual self, is called *tadhkiya-i nafs* or 'purification of the self'. This means embellishing the self with laudable and angelic attributes, after cleansing it from its blameable animal qualities. In other words, the self is purged of its depravity, is transformed into the *nafs-i lawwāma* ('accusatory self') and then finally becomes the *nafs-i muṭma'inna* or the 'tranquil self'. Thus *sulūk* is not movement in space, but an advancement in spiritual life, *i.e.* a spiritual progress from vicious attributes towards virtuous and laudable qualities; it is another name for the normal transmutation of the inner man.

The *sulūk* of the *Qalb* 'heart' is termed *taṣfiya-i qalb* or the 'cleansing of the heart'. By cleansing of the heart is meant erasing from it the love of the ephemeral world, its worry over griefs and sorrows, its leanings towards the wordlings and its vain-glorious thoughts.

The *sulūk* of the *sirr* (lit. 'secret', an organ of spiritual apprehension) is called *takhliya-i sirr* or the 'emptying of the *sirr*'. It means the emptying it of all thoughts that would divert attention from the remembrance of God. This faculty should be so guarded that the thought of anything other than God may not find its way into it. If something suddenly turns up, it should be erased immediately.

The *sulūk* of the *rūḥ* ('soul', an organ of mystical contemplation) is styled *tajliya-i rūḥ* or 'illumination of the soul'. It means filling the soul with the effulgence of the vision of God and the fervour of His love.

Sulūk thus consists of cleansing of the heart, purification of the self, emptying the *sirr* and illuminating the soul. In brief, its object may be regarded as the transformation of character or the forming of oneself on the moral nature of God. This brief statement has been elaborated in the following pages.

NAFS

Literally, *nafs* means 'essence', and the 'essence of a thing' is called the 'self' of a thing, or its 'reality' (*ḥaqīqa*). In Aristotelian terminology, the word signifies 'soul', whether the soul is material e.g. vegetable soul and animal soul, or abstract e.g. the souls of heavenly bodies and the human rational soul. In the terminology of ethics, *nafs* means the false fancy of a separate and independent human ego. It also means the carnal or appetitive soul—the seat of passion and lust. The Sufis understand it in this last sense.

The *nafs*, which has been regarded capable of purification, is the one which is attributed with animal qualities and bears the name *nafs-i ammāra* or the 'imperious nafs'. This *nafs* naturally has a leaning towards evil and commands us to do evil. The Koran says:

> The (human) soul enjoineth unto evil.[1]

When this soul is purified and begins to shun evil, it begins to reproach (and thus reform) itself. It is then called the *nafs-i lawwāma* or the 'reproaching soul'. Due to its nobility, God has sworn by it:

> And I do call to witness the self-reproaching soul.[2]

When this soul is thus completely purified and attains the pleasure or love of God, it develops the faculty of doing the right, and is no longer the source of evil. It acquires angelic attributes, and does what God commands it to do:

> Who flinch not (from executing) the commands they receive from God, but do what they are commanded.[3]

This *nafs* then becomes the source from which flow all good deeds and thoughts. Thus Khwāja Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshband says:

> I am now in possession of such a self that if I disobey its commands it would mean that I disobey God.

Here the Khwāja refers to the above-mentioned soul. This soul is

called the *nafs-i muṭma'inna* or the 'tranquil' or 'restful soul'. which has been addressed in the Koran thus:

> O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back thou to the Lord, well pleased (with thyself) and well pleasing unto Him.[4]

It should be noted that it is a single soul that is being addressed by different names, denoting the different stages of its development, and stressing its various attributes. Similarly in the terminology of the physicians, the same soul, which is like subtle vapour, is called animal soul in the heart, sensual soul in the liver and physical soul in the brain. This change of names is due to the difference of attributes, the object being named is the same.

THE CLEANSING OF NAFS

Now we shall see how the *nafs* may be cleansed of its vicious animal attributes, and how it gets itself transformed into the accusatory self, and how finally it acquires the attribute of 'tranquility' or rest. How is the purification of the *nafs* possible?

The purification of the *nafs* is impossible without practising self-remonstrance and austerity. As has been said:

> Alas! he who does not strive hard,
> Can never secure a treasure.

The Holy Koran has made austerity a condition for divine guidance:

> And those who strive in Our (cause) We will guide them to Our paths.[5]

For every beginner, for everyone in the middle stage and even for one who has reached the highest stage, self-remonstrance is indispensable, and in no circumstance can it be avoided by the devotee. Without it man is at a disadvantage, as it has been said in the Koran:

> Verily Man is in loss, except such as have faith and do righteous deeds.[6]

THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE NAFS

The necessity for austerity will be easily understood from the rational point of view when we bear in mind some of the attributes of the 'imperious self' and reflect on their harmful and destructive effects.

The author of *Miṣbāḥ al-Ḥayāt*, Maḥmūd ibn 'Ali al-Kāshānī has[7] described these attributes as follows:

1. *The first is the slavery to carnal desires (hawā)*. The *nafs* always wants to enjoy sensuous pleasures and fulfil its sensual desires. It craves for worldly pleasures and regards lust as its god. It is the same idol-maker and idol-worshipper[8] which the Koran has referred to in the following words:

> Then seest thou such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire.[9]

It is obvious that this attribute of the *nafs* cannot be eradicated except by self-remonstrance and austerity. Austerity here embraces the choosing of piety and developing the love of God in the heart,[10] in breaking the bonds of the enslavement of vain desires and obeying the Divine Commandments, in being in concord with the will of God, and in regarding Him alone as one's Friend. All these develop 'divine madness' in one, the cry of which is:

> We do not need any bond save that of Thy tresses,
> What wise lunatics we are!

2. *Another attribute of the nafs is hypocrisy (nifāq)*, that is, in many cases the *nafs* is not in accord with its interior; it extols people in their presence and disparages them in their absence. In their presence it displays sincerity, in their absence just the contrary. Here self-remonstrance and austerity mean the adopting of truth and sincerity, and forsaking hypocrisy.

3. *The third attribute of the nafs is ostentation* or *dissimulation (riyā)*. Vis à vis the other people, the *nafs* may appear to have laudable qualities, though these may be blameable before God, e.g. abundance of wealth and property and the pride of it, violence, independence etc. Similarly, when the *nafs* avoids whatever is reprehensible in the eyes of the people, though in God's eyes these things may be laudable, e.g. poverty, submission, humility, it is said to have *riyā*. As a result of this *riyā*, its possessor becomes popular among the people, but reprehensible in the eyes of God; he comes closer to the people but remote from God.

This attribute of the *nafs* can be remedied when it is revealed to it that the people

> create nought but are themselves created, and possess power neither over hurt nor profit for themselves and possess neither death nor life, nor power to raise the dead.[11]

They have nothing in their power which could be of profit to their lives. When such is the case, how can one benefit another?

The 'dissimulating' *nafs* should know that it resembles the fire which reveals its good attribute, i.e. light, and conceals its destructive attribute, i.e. consuming. But the sensible person is thoroughly aware of the dissimulator's activities and is not deceived. The more the dissimulator desires to appear good in the eyes of the people, the more he loses his dignity. If an ugly old woman adorns herself with sumptuous apparel of gay and varied colour and *henna*, it is likely that young children may regard the decoration as lovely, but the wise will look at her with disgust. Addressing dissimulators the poet Sa'dī has said:

> O, thou who hast thy skill in the palm of thy hand;
> And hast concealed the defects in thy arm-pit;
> O vain man! what dost thou want to buy
> With imitation silver on the day of judgment?

Ibn Mājā has said:

> Even the least dissimulation is false worship.

And a polytheist (i.e. a dissimulator) is deprived of God's forgiveness (as long as he remains one). The most effective remedy against dissimulation is that, as one endeavours to conceal one's sins from people, so also, one should try to keep one's virtues and good deeds hidden from them. Here the *via purgativa* is rather hard, but then dissimulation is a serious malady.

4. *Another attribute of the nafs is its claim to Godship (ulūhiyya)* and obstinacy against God. The *nafs* (here the ego) always wants that people should praise it, follow it and obey it; they should prefer it to all others, and be afraid of it, have confidence in its mercy in all circumstances. This is nothing but a claim to divinity, because all these relationships should be established with God alone and not with any being other than God. It conflicts with the Almighty God's Lordship. This is the culmination of pride. As Aḥnaf ibn Qais has said, it is surprising that man should be proud, because he

> Has come ashore out of the belly,
> Has come out twice from the urethra.

Similarly, another Sufi, commenting on the verse 'As also in your own selves: will ye not then see.'[12] says:

> It is surprising for man, who washes excrement with his hands

> once or twice daily and then feels proud, claims divinity and competes with the All-compeller of the heavens and the earth.

Hadrat Taus noticed pride in 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz soon after he had performed the *Hajj* but prior to his becoming the Caliph. So Hadrat Taus poked his finger into 'Umar's side and said:

> He whose belly is filled with filth does not walk thus.[13]

According to the Sufis, so long as the Divine attributes are not revealed to the devotee, the *nafs* does not renounce its claim to Divinity. When the devotee becomes aware that the attributes of existence, e.g. knowledge, power, will, etc, belong really to the Almighty God alone, and that his existence is only 'relative', he exclaims:

> Sometimes pride pricks us,
> At times the nail of humility scratches us,
> O Dard! we are nothing, but the false fancy of being existent
> Presents us every moment in a new form.

5. *Yet another attribute of the nafs is parsimony and avarice.* It does not want to relinquish whatever it has acquired in the form of property, possessions and pleasant things. The reason for this is either pride, or the fear of poverty in the future. When this attribute grows strong in the *nafs*, envy springs from it. An envious person does not like that anybody might benefit from someone else; and if he finds someone endowed with a particular gift, or whom fortune has favoured, he seeks his decline. When this process goes far, it results in hate. Such a person hates anybody who has wealth, who is distinguished and so he wishes him ill.

Avarice is the outcome of the love of wealth and property; it is the greatest mischief in the world. On the other hand, if one does not have wealth, one may suffer from hardship and poverty and due to this he may be driven to unbelief.

If one acquires wealth and property one may even grow rebellious and intolerant. As the Koran says:

> Nay, but man doth transgress all bounds in that he looketh upon himself as self-sufficient.[14]

As a poet has said:

> If I have no worldly possessions I become sad and dejected,
> If I have it, in its love I tie my feet to it.

There are two states of the destitute person: contentment and greed, the former is laudable, the latter despicable. Similarly, there are two states of an opulent person, one is avarice and parsimony, the other is spending and giving in charity. Avarice and parsimony, as attributes of the *nafs*, are not merely to be found in the souls of the wealthy only. With a few exceptions, this attribute is to be found in most people, because greed and parsimony are inherent in man's nature. It is said:

> If man is in possession of even two valleys of gold, he will aspire for a third one. Only the earth of the grave can fill man's belly, and God pays attention to those who turn towards Him.

The remedy for parsimony and love of wealth is contentment, as the Prophet of Islam, praising contentment, has said:

> Good tidings to him who is guided to accept Islam and finds just sufficient sustenance and is contented with it.

Another *Ḥadīth* speaks of contentment as the best opulence. The Sufis say:

> Man earns the world with three objects in view: honour, wealth and comfort; he who practised contentment gained respect, became wealthy as well, and enjoyed comfort too.

A miser should concentrate his attention on the virtues of generosity and should reflect on the beauty and excellence of generosity mentioned in the Koran and the *Ḥadīth*. Experience teaches us that nobody befriends a miser, but a liberal person is always liked by all. God too likes a munificent person, as has been announced:

> God is munificent and He loves those who are liberal.[15]

Asmā, the daughter of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, was told, and this can apply to all humanity:

> Thou shouldst not hoard money. If thou wouldst do this God will deal with thee likewise and will not give thee lavishly. Do not collect and do not be miserly, otherwise generosity will not be shown to thee; give as far as lies within thy power.[16]

The implication is that if one stops spending, the very source of sustenance is dried up, because God gives to him who gives to others. In a Tradition, a miser and a generous person have been contrasted thus: there are two persons who are clad in coats of mail from neck down to the chest. When the generous man spends his coat of mail

goes on expanding on his body until it covers his fingers even, and effaces his footprints. As regards the miser who does not intend to spend the rings of his coat of mail stick together; he expands but they do not.[17]

There is a story to the effect that once a sage saw a *rupee* in the hand of a man. He said:

> 'Who does this *rupee* belong to?' The man said: 'It is mine'. The sage said: 'It is not thine until it passes out of thy hand'.

To convey the same sense a poet has said:

> So long as thou keepest thy wealth stored, thou art its slave;
> When thou spendest it in the name of God, the wealth becomes thy slave.

These are but few of the attributes of the *nafs*. It is not possible to mention here in detail all the contemptible attributes of the *nafs*. That is why prophets, saints and sages have always practised austerity and have regarded the *nafs* as the most formidable obstacle to spiritual progress. Thus the Prophet of Islam says:

> Thy worst enemy is thy *nafs* which is between the two sides.

And he ordered his followers to

> Slay your *nafs* with the swords of self-mortification and austerity.

The eminent shaykhs have regarded the *nafs* as a great idol and have unanimously taught that:

> Fighting against the *nafs* is real worship, and being in concord with the *nafs* is the basis of unbelief.

And they have also taught:

> If thou desirest to live a good life, slay the *nafs*, for there is no other foe more formidable than thy *nafs*.

Muḥammad ibn Faḍl has said:

> Comfort is nothing but a release from the vain desires of the *nafs*.

> We forsook our object and by doing so gained it;
> These very objects were the veil on the face of our object.

The innumerable desires of the *nafs* are the veils which separate one from one's real purpose, which is, the union with God. As soon as these veils, which are in the form of layers upon layers, are lifted off the face of life, the object is gained. Dhū'n-Nūn of Egypt has been quoted as saying:

> The Almighty God bestowed the greatest honour on some devotee of His by making him aware of the vileness of his *nafs*, and He dishonoured to the utmost degree a devotee of His by keeping this knowledge veiled from him. Until the *nafs* is purged of its evil attributes the heart is not safe-guarded against diabolical thoughts.

A sage has narrated as follows:

> If thy *nafs* manifests itself even for a moment
> The din of satan will then be ringing in thy heart.

In all ages the spiritually aware have emphasized purification of the *nafs* and have boldly said:

> The coquetry of Diabolus is due to thy cunning only,
> Each desire in thee is itself thy diabolus.
> When thou fulfillest one desire of thine,
> A hundred Diaboluses are created in thee, that is all.[18]

The purpose of self mortification is releasing the *nafs* from the things of its desire and attachment[19] and in freeing it from following lust. Two attributes of the *nafs* deprive it of its good: indulging in things it covets and refraining from remembrance of God.

The *nafs* can be purified by austerity; then this purified *nafs* may be said to have advanced to the stage of 'acquiescence' or 'satisfaction' (*riḍā*). Purification of the *nafs* through austerities is an important aspect of Sufi training. As the Koran declares: *Truly he succeeds that purifies it.*[20]

The soul is no longer the 'soul depraved', it has now become the 'soul tranquil'. It is no longer the slave of desire or in the words of the Koran, the slave of *hawā* 'lust'. On the contrary, it is now in tune with the Divine Will and acquiesces in every act of God; this state could be described as agreement with the Divine Will and acquiescence in what is bestowed. The most reprehensible thing for the soul now is discontent and displeasure with God's Decree and prohibitions, or in other words 'egotism'. As a Sufi has said:

> The religion of love is not egotism,
> It is nothing save humility and submission.
> Be satisfied with whatever is given
> Nothing is more unpleasant than Thy dissatisfaction.

NOTES

1. *Koran* XII, 53.
2. *Koran* LXXV, 2.
3. *Koran* XXVI, 6.
4. *Koran* LXXXIX, 27–30.
5. *Koran* XXIL, 69.
6. *Koran* CIII, 3.
7. *Miṣbāh al-Hayāt*, by Maḥmud ibn Ali al-Kāshānī, Nawal Kishar Press, Lucknow, 1890, pp. 61–4. This book has been partly translated by Lt-Col H. Wilder-Clarke, Govt. of India Printing Press, Calcutta, 1891, pp. 73.
8. The Sufis do not enjoin celibacy or withdrawal from the world. But the attitude of the true Sufi is detachment from sense pleasures; attachment is only to the One Reality. The Sufis say, 'Be in the world but not of the world'.
9. *Koran* XLV 23.
10. Although there are Sufis who are gnostics, theosophists etc, love is perhaps the chiefest of Sufi teachings.
11. *Koran* XXV, 3.
12. *Koran* LI, 21.
13. The Sufis, while admitting that the body is an invaluable stepping stone to the Ultimate, yet caution us that it should not form the object of attachment or pride.
14. *Koran* XCVI, 6–7.
15. Qushayri, in one of his treatises, has narrated the following *ḥadīth*, on his own authority, that 'A'isha (the wife of Prophet Muḥammad) said that the Holy Prophet of Islam observed: 'A liberal man is near to God, near to mankind, near to Paradise and far away from the fire of hell. A miser is far away from the Garden of Paradise and nearer to the fire of Hell. An ignorant liberal man is liked by God more than a pious miser'.
16. Bukhārī and Muslim (These are two foremost narrators of *hadīth* or Traditions about the Prophet Muḥammad; their collections are accepted as canonical by the Muslims.)
17. Bukhāri and Muslim.
18. It is 'desire' for sensual things which is here depicted as the Devil, and not any external, physical devil.
19. Cf. Buddhism, with its teachings on desire and non-attachment.
20. *Koran* XCI, 8.

CHAPTER II

Cleansing of the Heart

'Cleansing of the heart' means erasing from it all the love of the world and the worldlings[1] and effacing from it all mundane griefs and sorrows and worry over futile things.

The word 'heart' (*qalb*) has a dual meaning: in one sense, it is the name for the pine-shaped mass of flesh that is placed on the left side of the chest; it has a cavity inside, filled with blood and is considered to be the source of the spirit. We are not concerned with this physical heart here. The heart we speak of here is a receptacle of God's grace and is spiritual in substance. This spiritual substance is the essence of the human being. It alone has perception, knowledge and gnosis or *mā'rifa*. It is the heart which is admonished, reprimanded and punished. It has the same relation with the pine-shaped piece of flesh as an accident has with the body, as an attribute is related to the substance to which it is attributed, a spatial object to the space it occupies and an instrument to the man who uses it. It is this heart which has been referred to as God's Throne and it is this heart that must be clean; 'cleansed' in *sulūk* or the 'spiritual journey'.

For cleansing the heart the shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqas* (the Sufi Path to God)[2] insist on keeping in view the approved practice ordained by God. They hold that according to the infinite wisdom of the All-Wise the more man is involved in worldly affairs and is concerned with material things, the more he is subject to troubles and vexations; the more he keeps himself busy in pampering his body and keeping up appearances, the more his mental state deteriorates, his spiritual faculties decay, the purity and effulgence of his heart lose their vigour, and impurity and darkness increase.[3] This is the reason why self-mortification and austerity are the conditions of *sulūk* 'spiritual progress' and abstaining from every object save God is one of the essentials of the Sufi Path to God.

An ignorant person is unaware of his own reality. He regards his physical body as his essence and is oblivious to the simplicity and abstract nature of his spiritual heart. Man occupies himself with feeding his body and in fulfilling the vain desires of his self in accordance with the dictates of his animal nature. So he wastes his life in satisfying his sensuous desires, while actually this is the place where provision for the Hereafter is to be made. But man, in quest of the unsubstantial world, forgets the 'place of return'. As a result, he is eventually destroyed by the self whose demands he obeys. The self by its domination kills him. In regard to such people the Koran says:

> Ye tempted one another and hesitated and doubted and vain desires beguiled you. The ordinance came to pass; the Deceiver deceived you concerning Allah.[4]

The Prophet of Islam has expressed surprise at the man who believes in the Everlasting Home (i.e. the spiritual ultimate) and yet strives for the House of Deception (i.e. the sensual, phenomenal world):

> It is most surprising that a man should vouch for the Everlasting Home and yet endeavour and exert himself in the pursuit of the House of Deception.

Cleansing of the heart is impossible unless love and attachment of the world are dispelled from it. The world in itself is not despicable, because it is the 'farm or seed-bed or corn-field of the Hereafter' and a means of attaining it. But love of the world and attachment to it are a hindrance. This is the meaning of the Prophet's saying:

> Love of the world is at the root of all sins.[5]

The world is capable of allowing a man to rise to the loftiest spiritual plane, or of plunging him into the deepest depths of degradation. The man who uses the world as a means of attaining spiritual upliftment and joy does not concentrate merely on the fleeting pleasures of this life, and ever keeps in mind the Divine warning contained in the words which unbelievers will hear:

> You received your good things in the life of the world and you took your pleasure out of them.[6]

He acts on the injunction: 'Spend out of what we have provided'. Such a man is only outwardly an inhabitant of the world, inwardly he passes the days of his life in the Exalted Assembly. He is alive for God and not for carnal pleasures. The world proves for him a mighty

help-mate in guiding him on the right path and he has been praised thus by the Prophet:

> How good is the wealth of the righteous man.[7]

The man whose heart is devoid of the love[8] of the world, and who derives pleasure in contemplation of God, such a man can call himself poor, just as Solomon in spite of possessing a vast kingdom still called himself poor. Rumi explains this as follows:

> What is this world? To be forgetful of God:
> It is not merchandise and silver, weighing scales and women.
> Since he dispelled from his heart the desire for wealth and possessions,
> On that account Solomon did not call himself (by any name) but poor.
> Whoever was profited by beholding God,
> Regarded this world as dead and lifeless.
> Both this world and its people are good for nothing;
> Both are alike in infidelity.
> Light appears like fire and fire like light.
> Otherwise the world would not have been regarded as a place of deception . . .
> O, Son! burst thy chains and be free;
> How long wilt thou be a bondsman of silver and gold?
> The world's life is not a day or two, but an hour;
> Whosoever renounced it lived in comfort.
> After renouncing it, drink the cup of everlastingness.

Detachment and renunciation must be an inner act of reality, done neither as a show of generosity, nor for gaining rewards in Paradise.[9] As Imām Ghazzālī says:

> The man who forsakes the world as a show of generosity, or in quest of the Hereafter cannot be called a recluse. According to the saints, even to abandon the world for the sake of the Hereafter is weak abstinence. A true gnostic is he who is not attached to the Hereafter, in the same way as he is not attached to this world, and everything save God has no value in his eyes. He has no other goal in life except God; this is 'the abstinence of the gnostics'. It is likely that such a gnostic does not eschew wealth and worldly possessions, but should he acquire them, he would spend them duly and give to the deserving . . . It is possible that a gnostic may be in possession of 100,000 *dirhams* and yet be a recluse, while another man may not have a penny and yet not be a recluse. The reason is that the gnostic neither regards the world as his friend nor as his enemy. The man who considers somebody as his enemy

> busies himself with him just like the man who regards him as his friend. He would reach perfection only when his heart becomes independent of everything except God.

As the Sufis say:

> Abstinence means forsaking the thing which will keep thee busy by drawing thee away from God.

Renouncing the world means emptying the heart of the love of the world. If this is not done, no amount of austerity can be beneficial. In his book, the *Thamarāt al-Ḥayāt*, Shaykh Burhān ad-Dīn illustrates the meaning of the above statement with the following story:

> Suppose a rat fell accidently into a well and died. The water would emit a foul smell. If one wants to cleanse the water of the well, he would first find the dead rat and draw out a few buckets of water and throw them away. The water will then be purified. Even if a large amount of water is drawn out, without taking out the body of the dead rat from the well, the well will still remain unclean and will stink. Similarly, no amount of self-mortification will be of avail if one has the love of the world in one's heart.[10]

The cherished object of the heart is usually its deity (*mā'būd*). For this very reason it has been said:

> Whatever is dear to thee is thy Lord

and

> Thou art the slave of the thing which thou desirest.

Unless the diverse impressions, which are the effects of the love of the world, are effaced from the heart its cleansing is not possible.

> How canst thy heart receive the Divine Grace?
> Thou art blackening the page (of thy heart) with scattered impressions.

The Companions and followers of the Prophet Muḥammad, in spite of their good and virtuous deeds, always remembered death, the destroyer of all the pleasures of the world.[11]

They always kept in view the reward appointed by God for the obedient and the punishment for the disobedient; thus the longing for the fleeting pleasures of the world was dispelled from their hearts. They read the Koran, reflected on it and listened to the sermons which softened their hearts.

Reflection on the verses of the Koran, which reveal the true nature of the world, is useful for cleansing the heart. Below, we mention a few such verses so that the devotee may think over them and cleanse his heart of the love of the world and the worldlings and of the griefs and sorrows of the world.

The Almighty God has termed the comforts of this worldly life as *qalīl* ('short') and has described the Hereafter as *khayr* ('best'). What a pity then if these 'short' and scanty comforts of the world were to come in the way of attaining the infinite good, and if these adventitious comforts, which have no real content, close the door to the Reality which is eternal. The Koran says:

> Say, short is the enjoyment of this world: the Hereafter is the best for those who do right. Never will ye be dealt with unjustly in the very least.[12]

Or again, the life of the world has been regarded as 'play and amusement' and the Hereafter as an asset. The former is the object of the slaves of passion and lust, and the latter that of the devotees of God. The Koran says:

> What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the Hereafter for those who are righteous. Will you not understand?[13]

The 'short' and 'scanty' comforts of this world are the material possessions, indulgence in which has been regarded as 'play and amusement'. The Koran says:

> Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet, women and children, hoards of gold and silver, horses branded (for blood excellence) and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but nearness to God is the best of goals.[14]

Those who forget God because they are too engrossed in the pursuit of lust and pleasures will be forgotten on the Last Day, in the same way as they have forgotten the Last Day and are oblivious of divine presence. The Koran says:

> Such as took their religion to be mere play and amusement and were deceived by the life of the world, that day shall We forget them as they forgot the meeting of this Day of theirs and as they were wont to reject Our signs.[15]

It is surprising then, that man, in spite of knowing that the world is

transitory and the Hereafter is everlasting, should concentrate on attaining the comforts of the world; and even after knowing that the world is a mirage, he should be engrossed in its spectacle. As the Koran says:

> Ye cling heavily to the earth? Do ye prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life compared with the Hereafter.[16]

A Sufi poet has said:

> I saw the fountain of this existence which is called the world;
> It did not contain even so much water with which hands could be washed.

The Koran has described the life of the world in a simile:

> The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain which We send down from the skies; by its mingling with the earth arises the produce of the earth, which provides food for men and animals: it grows till the earth is clad with its golden ornaments, and is decked out (in beauty); the people to whom it belongs think they have all power of disposal over it; then comes Our command, by night or by day, and We make it like a harvest clean mown, as if it had not flourished only the day before! Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who reflect.[17]

This points to the transitory nature of earthly existence. And it would be a pity if after knowing this we are so pleased with it and are deceived by it, so that we neglect the Ultimate. As a poet has said:

> What is the world? For us it is like a bubble,
> Or, it is the upper storey of smoke, or like a mirage?
> The heart of the man who does not regard it as such
> Always burns with anxiety like a *kebāb*.

And the Koran says:

> (The worldly) rejoice in the life of this world; but the life of the world is but little comfort in the Hereafter.[18]

Even the Prophet is forbidden to cast a longing glance at worldly possessions or to covet them. How much more should others be careful! This world is an ephemeral springtime by which our trial and test is intended. Says the Koran:

> Now strain not thy eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to pairs of them, being the splendour of the life of this

world through which We test them; but the provision of the Lord is better and more enduring.[19]

Whatever is in our possession today is the provision of this worldly life, but due to our ignorance we are enamoured of its form and colour. Owing to our forgetfulness[20] we are unable to appreciate that which is with God is better and more enduring. We should weep because of our misunderstanding,

O heart, how long wilt thou be deceived by this and that in this prison?
Come out once from this dark path that thou mayst see the world.

The Koran says:

The (material) things which ye are given are but the comforts of this life and the glitter thereof; but that which is with God is better and more enduring; will ye not then be wise?[21]

The wise man does not become attached to the world, nor does he lament at the passing away of the world, for his gaze is towards the Ultimate. As the Koran says:

Said those whose aim is the life of this world: 'Oh! that we have the like of what Qārūn had!' But those who have been granted (true) knowledge said: 'Alas! the reward of God none will attain save those who steadfastly persevere'.[22]

The Koran speaks of the life of this world as play and amusement in many places.[23] It also emphasizes at many places that life is transitory and unsubstantial.[24] And Sufi poets caution us not to take it as the ultimately Real, because it is not.

Likewise, the *ḥadīth*, or the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad, point in the same direction. 'A'isha narrates that the Prophet said:

The world is the abode of him who has no home and is the property of him who possesses nothing. He alone hoards who has no reason.[25]

In another tradition, the Prophet is supposed to have warned his followers at Medina that he did not fear their poverty but he feared that they might become too rich and thus become attached to the world and forget God.

In a long Tradition narrated by 'Umar ibn 'Auf, the Prophet is reported to have said:

I swear by God that I am not afraid of your poverty, but, I fear that the world will spread out and open for you, as it so expanded

> for the people before you, and you will compete among yourselves in attaining it, as people had done before you and it will destroy you as it had destroyed people before you. (Bukhārī and Muslim).

There is another Tradition which conveys the same sense, and which is narrated by Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥazrī:

> What after me I fear most for you is the expansion, the charm, attraction, richness and embellishment of the world. (Bukhārī and Muslim)

Or again, the Prophet said:

> The world and all that is in it is accursed except the remembrance of God and its corollaries.[26]

How aptly has Bahā ad-Dīn Āmulī said:

> If thou lookest at every fresh rose which is the jewel of this garden,
> It is a flower; if thou pickest it, it is a thorn.
> Behold the candle from afar, do not go near it,
> For though it appears as light, yet it is fire.

The purpose of God's sending Apostles to mankind is to turn people away from the passing world and turn them towards the Ultimate Reality. In no other tradition is this message so poignantly and so powerfully emphasized as in the Islamic concept of *tawḥīd*, as embodied in the *shahāda*:

> There is no god but God.

The shaykhs of the Sufi *Ṭarīqas* have also laid the same emphasis upon turning away from the world towards God and the Ultimate Reality. The shaykhs have compared the world to a shadow. For example, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī[27] has said:

> The world is like a dream or a passing shadow,
> A wise man is not deceived by such a thing.

Finally the dialogue between 'Umar Khayyām and 'Reason' is interesting, so we quote it here:

> Yesterday I was conversing with Reason,
> Some truths were revealed to my heart.
> Said I to it, 'O thou who art the storehouse of wisdom!
> I want to ask a few questions of thee.
> What is this life of the world?'
> It said, 'It is either a dream or some fancies.'
> I said, 'Tell me what is gained by it?'

It said, 'Headache and a few misfortunes.'
I said, 'When is this self subjugated?'
It said, 'When its ears are boxed a few times.'
I said, 'Who are the cruel people?'
It said, 'They are the wolves, dogs and jackals.'
I said, 'What are these discussions of the people of the world?'
It said, 'It is all stuff and nonsense.'
I said, 'In what work are the worldly people engaged?'
It said, 'In amassing riches and wealth.'
I said, 'What is matrimony?'
It said, 'The luxury of an hour and grief of a few years.'
I said, 'To what can the world be compared?'
It said, 'To an old woman who has adorned herself.'
I said, 'What thinkest thou about the sayings of Khayyām?'
It said, 'It is advice which is apt in some conditions for some people.'

For cleansing the heart it is necessary to reflect constantly and consciously on the truths mentioned above. This may and does help to bring about a change in one's mental attitude; otherwise one remains, as the Koran says:

> They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world; but of the End of things they are heedless.[28]

But creation has a purpose. The truth is that God has not created this world without a purpose and a meaning:

> Our Lord! not for naught has Thou created all this.[29]

This colossal workshop of the universe is not useless, having no purpose. Surely the series of these wonderful and wise arrangements must have been based on some grand purpose, and that purpose is the Hereafter, which is really the final outcome of the present life of the world.

All this vast universe, the heavens and earth, have been created only for the human being, and placed under his control, as the Koran proclaims:

> And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the Heavens and on the earth.[30]

It must be then evident that if man does not use the things of this universe, and fleeing from them, inhabits forests and mountains, the very purpose of the creation of the world would be destroyed. This is the reason why Islam does not preach monasticism. It has been prohibited by the Koran:

> But monasticism they invented — We ordained it not for them.[31]

It is also clear that though the world has been created for the human being, yet man has not been created for the world, to be captivated by it and lost. On the contrary, he is created for some nobler purpose. This noble purpose in the words of the Koran is:

> I created the Jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.[32]

And according to the *ḥadīth*:

> The world has been created for you and you are created for the Hereafter.

According to the Koran then, giving up the world, fleeing from it, choosing monasticism is totally unwarranted. On the other hand, the world is meant for men and women and they are meant for God and the Hereafter. The human being then must use the world according to the commandments of God so as to attain salvation in the Hereafter. The task of a Muslim is neither to be a hermit, nor a lover of the world. He is a man of the world but not a devotee of the world!

In the light of the above discussion, the meaning of the 'cleansing of the heart' may now be determined. Man should subject all his desires, passions, powers and control over things of the world to the command, pleasure and the love of God. It is not allowed that man (or woman) should renounce the world, and sever all ties with it; nor is it allowed, on principle, that one should give up matrimony and forsake family; it is also not allowed that one should destroy or abrogate all one's physical and mental faculties. On the contrary, the method of cleansing the heart is that one should subjugate all one's physical and mental faculties to the guidance of God, that is, one should make use of the things of the world according to the command of God. In other words, even with the ties of family and children, in spite of being engaged in earning a livelihood, by employment, trade or industry, one should not transgress the limits prescribed by God in respect of them; the accomplishment of this duty should be for God's good pleasure only,[33] and nothing should be sought and loved except God.

The Koran teaches neither defeatism nor quietism. Its teachings prevent one from worldliness on the one hand, and from monasticism on the other. The teachings of the Koran prevent us from indulging in vain things, and on the other hand prohibit us from going to extremes in worship. The Prophet Muḥammad always

advised a middle way. It is related from Bukhārī that the Prophet said:

> The commandments of religion are easy, and he who goes to extremes in religion is defeated by it. Stick fast to the right path, choose the *via media*, be happy at the glad tidings brought by me and seek assistance by praying early in the day, at the end of the day and late at night.

The *via media* may be explained by another Tradition of the Prophet's:

> Thy Lord has a claim on thee, thy self has a claim on thee and thy wife has a claim on thee. Pay the dues to everyone who has a claim on thee.[34]

By the 'claim of the self' is meant the means of assistance for the worship of God. There is necessarily a difference between the 'claim of the self' and 'pleasure of the self'. They are (or appear to be, until realization or 'awakening' comes) antithetical to each other. To pay what is due to the self is to perform what has been ordered by God; but to give in to the pleasure of the self is to follow lust, and following lust is prohibited. It is necessary to keep this difference in view in connection with the cleansing of the heart, otherwise man falling a prey to lust may imagine that he is only paying the dues of the self and will be lost.

The purpose of opposing the imperious self and lust is to come in agreement with the Will of God, as has been said by the Prophet:

> Until one's desire becomes obedient to what I have brought (one does not become a true believer).

If the self agrees with the Will of God without effort and desire becomes subject to *sharī'a*, then it is perfect. The caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz has said:

> If lust agrees with the Will of God[35] this state resembles honey and butter which mix well together.

THE GUIDANCE BY THE SHAYKH

It is customary with the Sufi Shaykhs that they guide and train the disciple in a manner consistent with his capacity and psychology. They do not try to pull him immediately out of the state in which he is found, nor do they ask him to perform difficult penances. They suggest to him such Sufi practices as are compatible with his tem-

perament and disposition. Thus by degrees and with ease they take him to the destination. These great Shaykhs say:

> Whosoever's path towards God is according to his taste and aptitude, the attainment of the proximity of God is easy for him. The more remote the practices are from his natural bent, the slower his journey.

Consequently, Shaykh Ibn 'Aṭā Allāh Sikandarī would say:

> Choose only such *dhikrs* pertaining to the love of God as are according to your natural aptitude.

The *Imām* of the *Shādhiliyya silsilah* of Sufis, Shaykh Abū'l-Ḥasan Shādhilī has said:

> He who guides you in a manner consistent with your comfort (psychology) is the true shaykh.

This saying is in conformity with the Prophet's saying: 'Religion is easy' or 'Be lenient, do not be severe'. The Prophet is also supposed to have said:

> He who guided you towards the world played a traitor to you, and he who insisted that you should practise unnecessary austerity and self-mortification caused you grief and trouble, and he who showed you the path of God was your real well-wisher and adviser.

Undoubtedly, the spiritual guide is someone who is gifted with the spiritual, miraculous power of smashing the shackles of the self by his will power and making effective changes in the selves of the disciples who may have considered Reality as 'play and amusement', until they find that

> there is no fleeing from God and no refuge but to Himself.[36]

All men endowed with inward sight concede that penance and austerity are beneficial only under the instructions of a 'realized' shaykh. Purification from moral impurities and the attainment of earnestness and humility in prayers and worship are not secured unless the path to God is traversed under the guidance of a perfect Shaykh, who is conversant with human psychology and who knows of spiritual matters by learning, taste and experience; or in other words one who is a realized being. By merely reading about the path one cannot attain it, just as a patient suffering from a physical ailment cannot get well by merely reading books on medicine. Sha'rānī writes in his *al-Anwār al-Qudsiyya*:

> The adepts who know the way leading to the presence of God agree that the guidance of the shaykh is necessary for traversing the path to God, so that such weaknesses and failings that may hinder man from attaining the Presence of God may be eradicated from human nature, that his prayers might be corrected and earnestness and humility may be developed in worship. It is undoubtedly true that the treatment of inward maladies is obligatory, because the verses of the Koran and the *hadīth* of the Prophet are replete with the directives that these inward maladies must be cured. Therefore, if the instructions of a perfectly realized shaykh are not followed to cleanse the heart, to purify the self, and to get rid of abominable qualities, it would necessarily mean disobedience of God and the Prophet's behests. If a man endeavours to root them out by his own personal efforts, without the aid of the shaykh, he may never suceed. His case would be just like that of the man who memorizes books on medicine, yet he cannot be cured. It has always been the way of God that the living are benefited by the living and one light is kindled from another.[37] No change wilt thou find in the practice (approved) of God.[38]

This is the reason why it has been said by Khwāja Yūsuf Hamadhānī:

> Keep company with God. If it is not in your power to keep company with God, then choose the company of him who lives in the company of God, until you too may reach in the company of God, the Almighty.

Similarly, Maulānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, the great gnostic Sufi of Rūm says:

> Nothing came into existence by itself;
> No iron did become a sword by itself;
> The *Moulwi* could never become Maulā-i Rūm
> Until he became the slave of Shams-i Tabrez.

And Khwāja Naqshband has advised:

> O son! It is not possible in the path of love
> To traverse the path without the aid of a guide.

It is therefore necessary that the mirror of the heart should be placed before a perfect man whose heart is alive to God, and has been blessed with the vision of God. Then only whatever is on the mirror of the heart of the perfect man (be it Shaykh or Pir or Guru) is reflected on the mirror of our hearts; the way of receiving spiritual benefits is widened and we may cry out:

For years, we wandered around the world to achieve our object,
The Friend was in the house and we had been roaming around the world.[39]

After the cleansing of the heart, we come to realize that God is nowhere but in our hearts; we are oblivious of Him; He is present every moment and we are forgetful of Him. As the Koran says:

We verily created man and We know what his soul whispereth to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.[40]

and a poet has said:

The pod of musk thou seekest is in thy patched cloak only,
Thou didst not smell its scent due to thy ill luck.

It is related that in his loving converse with God, David said to God:

'O Almighty God! where should I seek Thee?' Said God: 'Seek Me in the hearts which (cured of pride and vanity and freed from carnal pleasures) are broken for Me alone'.

The traces of the thing thou desirest to find,
Is with thee only; thou seekest it at another place.

When the heart is veiled by impurities of the self, and is filled with things and consciousness other than God, then this fountain of *aqua vitae* is filled with earth and dries up.

The spring out of which Khidr[41] drank the water of life,
Is in your possession, but is filled with earth.

DHIKR

Men blessed with inward sight have regarded *dhikr*, 'the constant remembrance and recollection' of God as the most effective method of cleansing the heart and attaining to the Presence of God.[42] The object of all worship is remembrance of God, and regular and constant remembrance alone creates love of God and empties the heart of the love or attachment to the phenomenal world.

The basic and the single most important tenet of Islam is implicit in the *shahāda* or 'the confession of faith', *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, which means 'there is no god but God' or 'there is no object worthy of worship save Allah' and this is nothing but the constant remembrance of God; all other forms of worship emphasize this remembrance. The spirit of prayer is remembrance. The object of fasting[43] is to smash sensuality, for when the heart is purged of its

filth, it is filled with the remembrance of God. The object of the *hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca is the remembrance of God and the longing to meet Him.[44] Renouncing attachment to the world and eschewing sensuality is for the sake of acquiring leisure for occupying oneself with the aforesaid remembrance only. The goal of command and prohibition by God is also *dhikr* or 'remembrance'. As a result of *dhikr*, the heart is emptied of the love of all things and it is severed from all; it is then inclined towards God alone. The Koran enjoins man:

> Devote thyself to Him whole-heartedly.[45]

So with *dhikr*, the heart overflows with the love of God so much that it has no room for anything else; the link of love with everything else is cut off and there remains no object of love except God.

The disciple, after receiving instructions about *dhikr* from his Shaykh, should busy himself whole-heartedly with it (after having performed the obligatory prayers). He should omit supererogatory and voluntary prayers, but should limit himself to *dhikr* alone, night and day, and every living moment, regarding all other things as tribulation. If at the same time he can detach himself from the sorrows and fears of the world, but is concerned with *dhikr* alone in every state, then the veils are lifted off his heart. These veils are the reflection of phenomenal forms. He who is engaged in the remembrance of God, negates the contingent forms of the world; by the unsheathed sword of *lā ilāha* he negates all stray thoughts, and by *illā Allāh* he beholds the existence of the Eternal Being of God alone, which is his ultimate goal. He negates whatever he is attached to and regards it as false, and instead establishes the love of God by affirmation, until gradually the heart becomes void of its beloved things completely and the essence of the unity of God, *tawḥīd*, is firmly rooted in his heart. His inward eye opens, and now for him there does not remain any contradiction between reason and unity; at this point, the reality of the *dhikr* and the substance of the heart become one. This state has been interpreted as the 'trans-substantiation of the heart' by Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī. No thought other than God remains in the heart. He who is engaged in the remembrance of God, is overwhelmed by the *dhikr* which releases his heart from all else. According to the famous *ḥadīth qudsī*:

> My earth and My heaven contain Me not, but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me.

Beauty and Majesty[46] are revealed to the heart, and the reality of

> Everything that is thereon will pass away; There remaineth but the countenance of thy Lord of Might and Glory[47]

is manifested.

Thus Bābā Kūhī of Shirāz cries out:

> In the market, in the cloister—only God I saw;
> In the valley and on the mountain—only God I saw;
> Him have I seen beside me oft in tribulation;
> In favour and in fortune—only God I saw.
> In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation
> In the religion of the Prophet—only God I saw.
> Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,
> Qualities nor causes—only God I saw.
> I opened mine eyes and by the light of His face around me
> In all the eye discovered—only God I saw.
> Myself with mine own eyes I saw most closely,
> But when I looked into nothingness, I vanished
> And lo, I was the All-living—only God I saw.[48]

The Sufis call this state when the heart is so 'cleansed', *fanā'* or 'annihilation' or 'passing away'. And some Sufis consider it the end of the journey unto God.

> There is no way (admittance) for anyone till he becomes naughted,
> Into the audience chamber of (Divine) Majesty.
> What is the means of ascension to Heaven? This not-being,
> Not-being is the creed and religion of the lovers of God.

Some Sufis refuse to talk further, because the goal in view is hardly attained by mere talking. It is acquired by inward search and striving.

In respect of this purified heart, the author of *Rūḥ al Arwāḥ* has described Almighty God's address in the following words:

> God talked of Lordship to the bodies, and to the hearts He talked of love. Said He: 'O bodies! I am God, and O hearts! I am your Friend. O bodies! undergo pain and trouble, because Lordship demands that you should serve and worship Me, and O hearts! be joyous. O bodies! enjoy the blessings secured from austerities, and O hearts! enjoy the beatific vision. O bodies! do not give up obeying Me. O hearts! do not obey without My remembrance. O bodies! suffer pain, and O hearts! secure the treasure.'[49]

NOTES

1. Love, in this context, denotes attachment to the world and the worldlings, the injunction is to develop an attitude of detachment and compassion, not attachment..
2. Literally it means 'road, way, path'. It is both a method of moral psychology for the practical guidance of individuals who had a mystic call, and, since the eleventh century, it came to denote the whole system of rites for spiritual training laid down for communal life in the various Sufi orders which began to develop about that time.
3. Compare, for example, the connection between attachment and darkness in the Gita, especially Chapter XIV.
4. *Koran* LVII, 14. Some Commentators have explained it thus: *Ye tempted one another* means by lust and sensuous pleasures. *Hesitated* here means hesitation from repentance. *Doubted* until *the ordinance* (of Allah), i.e., the ordinance of death came to pass, and *the Deceiver deceived you* in respect of God.
5. al-Baihaqī. Again love here means attachment. It is not to be opposed to hatred (because that is attachment as well) but to detachment. The world has its value in Sufism, because it is what allows a being to rise to the loftiest spiritual plane.
6. *Koran* XLVI, 20.
7. al-Baihaqī.
8. Vide above, notes 1 and 5.
9. Cf. the great woman saint of Islam, Rābi'a al-'Adawīya, who died in Basra in 801 A.D. as having said: 'O My Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of hell, burn me therein, and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty'.
10. Quoted from *Jawāhir-e-Ghaibī* by Sayyed Muzaffar 'Ali Shah, Printed at Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow 1887, 357.
11. This is remembering death for the sake of attaining detachment from earthly pleasures. The Buddhists have an interesting meditation for producing detachment from food and eating.
12. *Koran* IV, 77.
13. *Koran* VI, 32.
14. *Koran* III, 14.
15. *Koran* IX, 38.
16. *Koran* IX, 38.
17. *Koran* X, 24.
18. *Koran* XIII, 26.
19. *Koran* XX, 131.
20. The point about forgetfulness is important not only in Sufism, but in Islam. Just as in Christianity 'original sin' is responsible for the unangelic state of mankind, so in Islam what leads to the downfall of mankind is forgetfulness and negligence (*ghaflāh*) of what we really are. Vid., Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, 1966, Chapter I.
21. *Koran* XXVIII, 60.
22. *Koran* XXVIII, 79, 80.
23. For example: What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But, verily, the Home in the Hereafter is life indeed, if they but knew. (*Koran* XXIX, 64).
The life of this world is but play and amusement; and if ye believe and guard

against evil, He will grant you recompense (*Koran* XLVII, 36)
Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children; as the likeness of vegetation after rain, whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman, but afterward it drieth up and thou seest it turning yellow, then it becometh straw. And in the Hereafter there is grievous punishment, and (also) forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure, whereas the life of the world is but matter of illusion. (*Koran* LVII, 20)

24. For example: Nay (behold) ye prefer the life of the world; but the Hereafter is better and more enduring. And this is in the books of the earliest (revelations), the Books of Abraham and Moses. (*Koran* LXXXVII, 16, 19).
25. Aḥmad and Baihaqī.
26. For understanding this *ḥadīth* (= Tradition; this is an account of a saying or doing of the Prophet Muḥammad), it is necessary to bear in mind that in the remembrance of God are included things which help His remembrance, and all good deeds, only attachment to the enticing world is denounced. These enamour a man of their love, and prevent him from the love of God (which is much sweeter) and embolden him to do prohibited acts.
27. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642–728) was a great renunciate, and by his ascetic piety, he has exercised a lasting influence on the development of early Sufism.
28. *Koran* XXX, 7.
29. *Koran* III, 191.
30. *Koran* XLV, 3.
31. *Koran* LVII, 27.
32. *Koran* LI, 56.
33. Sufism (and indeed Islam) do *not* teach man to renounce life, family, job etc. On the contrary, they encourage man to live and work, and the saying 'no monkery in Islam' is well-known. But one must not abuse nature, because according to Islam the things of nature are 'signs' or 'miracles' of God. But nor should one 'love' them, i.e. become attached to them. The centring rather is always on Allah who is the Ultimately and Everlastingly Real, the Only Real as it were.
34. Bukhārī. The Koran advises the middle way in all things, e.g. it enjoins one to pray not too loudly, nor yet completely silently etc.
35. This is a reference to 'Umar II, the Umayyad caliph of Islam at Damascus from 717 A.D. to 720. He is often referred to as 'Umar the pious.
The example given is this: If the parents direct a boy to eat sweets and forbid him to eat bread, the eating of sweets and deriving pleasure from it is more beneficial for him than the eating of bread and forsaking the pleasure of eating of sweets. Thus the Shaykhs always guide and train a disciple in a manner consistent with the disciple's needs and psychology.
36. *Koran* IX, 118.
37. That is, the inner light of the soul may be awakened by a perfected Master.
38. *Koran* XXXIII, 62.
39. 'Friend' here refers to God dwelling within the human heart.
40. *Cf. Koran* L, 16.
41. Also called al-Khaḍir, he is the mystical, mythological figure in Islam, which means the 'green man'. He is immortal, legends and stories regarding this fascinating figure are primarily connected with the Koranic story in Sura XVIII, 60–82. He protects the servants of God, meets them in the weirdest circumstances and leads them to God.
42. The great value of chanting the Divine Name is realised in other mystical traditions also.

43. Fasting from sunrise to sunset during the whole month of Ramadan is one of the five religious duties in Islam. For the spiritual significance of it, *see*, Arthur Jeffery, *Reader on Islam*, Mouton & Co. 1962, 88–123. This discusses the Prophet's traditions on fasting. Also *see* al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (tr. R. A. Nicholson) 1967, 320–325.

44. Vid. Hujwīrī, op. cit. 326–33. He discusses the spiritual significance of the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage in a most beautiful way.

45. *Koran* LXXIII, 8.

46. Beauty, *jamāl*, and Majesty, *jalāl* are two of the Ninety-nine most beautiful Names of God in the Koran. Rudolf Otto, the twentieth century German Protestant theologian talks of these same two elements in his theory of the appearance of the Numen as 'mysterium tremendum, mysterium fascinans'. *See*, Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, O.U.P. New York, 1966.

47. *Koran* LV, 26–7.

48. Vid. R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, London, 1914, 59. It is the translation of a part of a Persian ode by the dervish-poet, Bābā Kuhī of Shirāz who died in 1050 A.D.

49. This quote is from *Rūḥ al-Arwāh*, quoted by Shaykh Rukn ad-Dīn Kāshānī in *Shamā'il-i atqia*, Ashraf Press, Hyderabad, 1347 A.H., 263.

CHAPTER III

Dhikr and Prayer

If you concentrate all your attention on your Friend,
You will begin to love Him and earn His response.

As we said in the last chapter, cleansing of the heart signifies detachment from everything that is other than God, emptying the heart of the love of the world and dispelling all evil thoughts from it. This is the outcome of the recollection of God. When the effulgence of His remembrance enters into the heart, it becomes devoid of the griefs and sorrows of the world, and is filled with the love of God alone. The light of His remembrance turns the heart into a radiant lamp; otherwise in Rūmī's words this heart is nothing but a 'bottle for urine'.

The heart void of light is not at all a heart;
When spirit is lacking, no part is whole.
The bottle which does not contain the light of life,
Call it not a lamp, 'tis a bottle for holding urine.

The heart of one who is forgetful of God is merely the 'wall of a room', and the heart of him who remembers God is the object of Divine illumination.

That is the reason why eminent Sufis have considered the remembrance of God necessary for the cleansing of the heart. This is not their personal opinion, but is prescribed by the Koran and the *hadīth*. First let us see how the Koran emphasizes the need for *dhikr* 'remembrance' of God.

The believers are urged:

> O, ye believers! remember Allah with much remembrance and glorify Him early and late.[1]

In the words of Mujāhid, the meaning of 'remembrance' of God is 'that which cannot be forgotten under any circumstances'. It is the same as *yād-dāsht* or 'perpetual remembrance', as some great Sufis have called this state. The Koran says:

> Remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining.[2]

Explaining the above verse, Ibn 'Abbās says:

> Remembrance of God has been commanded in every state—in the day time and at night, on land and at sea, during a journey, in opulence and in penury, in sickness and in health, outwardly and inwardly.

Ibn 'Abbās also says:

> God did not make any form of worship compulsory for His servants, to which He did not fix a limit; he also exempted those who have an excuse. But *dhikr* 'remembrance' is such a worship that God did not put a limit to it, nor did He exempt anyone from it, except the insane, and He commanded all to remember Him in every state.

The Koranic verse,

> The remembrance of God is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt,[3]

is sufficient to show the importance of 'remembrance'. The Koran further says:

> Then ye remember Me, I will remember you.[4]

Forgiveness and reward are promised to those men and women who remember God:

> And men who remember Allah much, and women who remember—Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.[5]

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, commenting on the above verses, says:

> You should seek joy in three things: prayer, remembrance and the Koran. If you do not do it, know that you are the slaves of worldly entanglements. However it is obvious that these things are not three, but really one; for prayer and the Koran consist of remembrance. Further, remembrance is a name of the Koran itself, and by prayer is meant the remembrance of God: *Establish prayer for My remembrance.*[6]

Commenting on the above verse Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz says:

> According to the meaning of this verse, whoever will remember God with his limbs, heart and tongue and is at the same time engaged in earning his livelihood will be counted among those who always remember God. Thus, all Muslims who obey the

> Divine Commandments and abstain from prohibited things will be considered as those who remember God, and those who act against the *sharī'a* will be regarded as rebellious transgressors though they may be engaged day and night in any Sufi practices or remembrance.

Forgetting God is like forgetting one's own self. As the Koran attests:

> And be ye not like those who forget God; and He made them forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors.[7]

And the one who neglects his own soul is in the spiritual sense lost. The Koran says:

> If anyone spares himself from the remembrance of (God) the Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one to be an intimate companion.[8]

This means that ignoring the remembrance of God results in being dominated by Satan (or non-Godly forces) which prompt one every moment and create evil suggestions in the heart, and do not leave one until they drag one to hell (or completely deviate one from the path of God and the good). When evil forces, which deflect the human heart away from the divine path, have a firm hold on the heart of a man, his mind becomes so perverted that he does not even know that God exists. Forsaking the remembrance of God results in his heart being dominated by evil forces. The Koran says:

> The Evil one has got the better of them; so he has made them lose the remembrance of God. They are the party of the Evil one; truly it is the party of the Evil one that will perish.[9]

Finally, one more verse in connection with the obligation of the remembrance of God. It is worthy of reflection. In praise of His righteous servants, saith God:

> Men who are not forgetful of the remembrance of God during bargaining or selling.[10]

From this above verse, Khwāja Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshband infers perpetual remembrance of God which, according to him, is 'much remembrance' of God or *Dhikr Kathīr*, as it does not stop but goes on continually;[11] because during buying and selling and business transactions, oral remembrance comes to a stop, and mental remembrance of God alone can continue in the heart. As already stated, this remembrance is also called *yād-dāsht* or 'perpetual remembrance' of God. The following verse supports the same idea:

> Keep in remembrance the name of the Lord and devote thyself to Him whole-heartedly.[12]

It has been urged in this verse that remembrance of God and the relationship with Him should dominate man's heart, and expel everything else from it; and while sitting, standing and walking one should busy oneself in intuiting His Presence. The relationship of other than God should not, even for a moment, divert one's attention from Him; thus severed from all ties, only the relationship with God must remain in the heart. In other words, all relationships should be merged in one only, which the Sufis call the feeling perpetually of the intimate Presence of God, or Divine Contemplation. As a dervish poet has said:

> My life and heart are busy in Thee, and my eyes turned towards right and left,
> So that rivals should not know thou are my Beloved.

After citing these verses of the Koran, I refer to a few *hadīths* of the Prophet Muhammad regarding the obligatoriness of the remembrance of God and its advantages.

'Abdullah ibn Naṣr narrates:

> A man said, 'O Prophet of Islam, I have been over-burdened with the mandates of the *Sharī'a*, suggest to me such thing to which I may hold fast.' Said the Prophet, 'Thy tongue should never cease from the remembrance of God'.

It has been narrated by Abū Dardā that the Prophet of Islam said:

> 'Shall I not inform you of the acts which your Lord regards as better, and more virtuous, which are the means of elevating your rank and which are better than the giving of gold and silver in charity; are even better than fighting against your enemy, slaying them and being slain by them?' They said 'yes'. The Prophet said, 'The remembrance of God.'[13]

As a poet says:

> I uttered Thy name and set fire to my life,
> I am like the candle, amidst fire, due to my tongue.

Bukhārī and Muslim narrate from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar that the Prophet said:

> 'Nothing is more effective in saving us from the punishment of God than His remembrance.' People said, 'Will not even fighting in the cause of Allah save us?' He said, 'No, no deed can equal the

remembrance of God, even the Crusader's using his sword so much that it snaps'.

Muslim narrates from Abū Huraira, that the Prophet said:

'The detached ones have surpassed.' People said, 'O, Prophet of God, who are the detached ones?' He said, 'Those men and women who remember God without stint'.

As a Sufi poet has proclaimed:

The heart of a believer derives pleasure from the joy of belief,
The pleasure of faith affords pleasure to the believer.
All other pleasures are forgotten,
When the inward derives pleasure from the remembrance of God.

Anās has related directly from the Prophet: 'Saith God, "I am with the thought of My servant and am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I too remember him in My heart. If he remembers Me in an assembly, I too recollect him in an assembly, and this assembly is better than his assembly'."[14]

Do not forget God, so that thou mayst be His friend;
If thou ever rememberest Him, surely thou wouldst become His companion.

Abū Huraira narrates that the Prophet said: 'God Almighty says, "I am with My servant when he recollects Me and his lips move through Me only".'[15]

Qushairī has narrated from Anās:

Doom will not overtake him who says, '*Allah, Allah*'.

In another *ḥadīth* it has been narrated

Doomsday will be held when *Allah, Allah* will no more be uttered on the earth.

Abū Mūsā has related directly from the Prophet:

The man who remembers God can be compared to one who is alive, and the man who does not remember his Lord can be compared to one who is dead, i.e. one who recollects God is alive and one who does not remember Him is dead.[16]

After knowing the emphasis laid on remembrance and its advantages, we can understand the following saying of Abū 'Alī Daqqāq:

Remembrance is a charter of God's Friendship. Whosoever has

been granted the grace of remembrance has been given the following injunction, 'You are really the friend of God'.[1]

Here the question may arise: Why has the remembrance of God, which is so easy and does not entail any hardship, been regarded as more beneficial and superior than other forms of worship which involve arduous and exacting acts? In reply, Imām Ghazzālī says:

> This fact can be established by mystical knowledge; but to the extent of practical knowledge, it can be said that only that remembrance is effective and beneficial which is continuous, perpetual and done with the presence (of God) in mind. As regards remembrance which is verbal and in which the heart was busy in play and amusement, it is only slightly beneficial.

The Prophet's *ḥadīth* supports this view.

As a dervish poet has said:

> When thou hast no presence of mind while remembering God,
> Even if thou be busy the whole life, thou wilt gain nothing.
> But the recollection of the face of the Beloved,
> Is never void of benefit and is after all useful.

Similarly, when one remembers God for a while with the presence of mind, and then forgets Him, and is engaged in worldly affairs, that too, does not benefit much.[18] Perpetual recollection, or presence with God all the time has preference over all worship. Further, by such remembrance all kinds of worship acquire a sort of dignity and this remembrance is the end and object of all acts of worship. Like everything, remembrance too has a beginning and an end. The beginning of remembrance is the cause of the love of God and the end of remembrance makes this love a necessity for the heart, and this very love is the highest end of a devotee. Thus it is clear that the object of remembrance is not merely recollection, just as the object of knowledge is to use it, and the object of reading the Koran is to act upon it. The object of remembrance of God is love of the remembered One, so that His gnosis and love may be developed, and His Proximity may be attained. In view of this *ultima Thule*, the devotee turns his heart and tongue towards God. But, when he acquires the habit of perpetual remembrance of God, he begins to love it, and as a result of it, the said love is instilled into the recesses of his heart. He then does not enjoy peace of mind without it, and he cries out:

> Those years of mine alone are useful in which I may recollect Thy face,

My life is of use only when I lay it down under Thy feet.
When Thou art in my heart, why should, then, I worry for this and that?
When Thou art in the place of life why should I care for life?
Thou art so engrossed in Thy glories and I in their adoration!
Who is there now to tend the feeble heart?
What will he do with life who knew Thee?
What concern will have he with family and children?
Thou makest him distracted in Thy love and then conferest both the worlds,
Of what use are both the worlds for a lunatic?

At this stage one considers useful only that part of life which is spent in the remembrance of his Beloved. For him, a forgetful heart and death appear to be one and the same. Such a pure-hearted person has no concern either with bemoaning or with discussions. His mental state is beautifully expressed thus:

Only Thy thought was hidden and Thy quest encamped,
In my heart-burning sighs, in my jubilant cries;
I have no concern with any one, am concerned with my work,
Which is Thy remembrance, Thy thought and Thy name.

The object of the constant remembrance of God, in the words of the Sufis, is to awaken this ardent love of God. According to them, the cause of creation and the source of wisdom is this very love.

SOME IMPORTANT DHIKRS

What we said above proves conclusively that *dhikr* or the remembrance of God is enjoined by clear and categorical verses of the Koran. What is enjoined is *dhikr* as such, and this is opposed to *ghaflah* ('forgetfulness'). It follows that whatever may remind us of God's Essence, attributes or perfections is in reality *dhikr* or 'remembrance'. Keeping this in view, *ṣalāt* ('ritual prayer'),[19] reading the Holy Koran, uttering the Ninety-nine Names of God,[20] saying *Tahlīl* (there is no object worthy of worship except God), *Takbīr* (God is great), uttering the *shahāda*,[21] *Istighfār* (asking forgiveness of God), *Isti'ādha* (seeking refuge in God from the promptings of the evil forces), and prayers for the Prophet Muḥāmmād or *Durūd* are all included in remembrance.

Of all these *dhikrs*, the shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqas* have especially chosen the name of the Essence of God, *i.e. Allah*, and the *dhikr* of *Nafy wa Ithbāt, i.e.* the *dhikr* or negation and affirmation or *Lā*

ilāha illā Allāh. They have chosen this latter because the Prophet himself has regarded it as superior to all *dhikrs*.[22]

There are a number of *ḥadīths* describing its advantages. It is the very essence of all *dhikrs*. It is the hub of the Unity of God, *tawḥīd*, and is a resplendent light. The entire Koran explains in detail its meaning and significance. It negates all false deities and affirms the One Reality. Not only does it negate false gods, but it also negates all ephemeral objects, and forms a close connection with the One Object, the *desideratum*, *i.e.* it is concerned with the remembrance of God and frees one from all confusion and discomfiture.

The Name of the Essence or *Dhāt*, or God, i.e. *Allāh*, has been chosen as supreme for the remembrance of God, because while all the Ninety-nine Names of God are the names of His attributes, which signify particular qualities, *Allāh* is the Proper Name of God, which indicates the Essence of God, to which all His attributes relate. To remember God by this short name is, as it were, to recollect His Essence together with all Names and Attributes. Besides, the ease and limitlessness with which the remembrance of the *dhikr* of *Allāh* is possible, is not possible with any other name. If all the ninety-nine names are uttered, the uttering of them cannot be regarded equal to it from the point of view of comprehensiveness, as *Allāh* is the very Essence together with all Names and Attributes. Besides, the ease and great Shaykhs, that every name has a special light, and has a particular effect. The Name of the Essence (*Allāh*) is the source of all lights, and of the properties of all Names. As it is the proper Name of God, it establishes a direct connection with the Absolute Essence. It is also worthy of note that *Allāh* is the Name of the Lord and cherisher of all human beings. Consequently, every individual has a firm connection with this Holy Name; he is benefited by it in all circumstances, and it is a cure for all his ills. That is why the Name of *Allāh* is spoken of as the Great Name. This comprehensiveness is not found in any other Name. For these reasons, the Shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqas* have preferred the remembrance of the name of the Essence.

The emphasis laid by the great Sufis on the repetition of the Name of the Essence has created a doubt as to whether the mere repetition of His Name can help us in winning His grace, especially in the mind of the Imām Ibn Taimiyya.[23] But the repetition of the Name of the Essence without joining anything to it can be justified from many verses of the Koran:

(1) Remember Me and I will remember you.

(2) Call upon Allāh or call upon Raḥmān, by whatever name ye call upon Him (it is well); for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. (S. XVII 110)
(3) Remember the Name of Thy Lord at dawn and dusk. (S. LXXVI 25)
(4) So remember the name of Thy Lord and devote thyself with complete devotion. (S. LXXIII 8)

And the Prophet's *ḥadīth* tells us:

(1) Doomsday will be held when *Allāh Allāh* will not be uttered on earth.
(2) Doom will not overtake him who says *Allāh, Allāh.*[24]

Objections have been raised by Muslim scholars regarding the special methods of *dhikr* or the postures for remembrance chosen by the Shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqas* as being unauthenticated by the *Sharīʿa*. They have called these methods *bidʿa* or 'innovation'. (*See*, Appendix I, on the problem of *bidʿa* in Islam.)

Our answer is that the different methods of *dhikr*, *i.e.* the repetition of the name of the Essence, or of the *shahāda* by restraining breath etc are like the rules of syntax, for understanding the language of the Koran and the Prophet's *ḥadīths*; these are the necessary tools. No one has regarded them as leading to the Proximity of God in themselves. If anyone has regarded these instrumental devices as ends in themselves, then of course, they must be regarded as innovations for him alone.

But experience bears witness to the fact that the presence of the mind with God, which is the real goal, cannot be attained unless the methods and procedures suggested by the great Sufis are adopted; they seem to be indispensable, especially for the novice. That is the reason why among the Shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqas*, those who are the interpreters of the law, and are Divine Contemplatives, in the true sense of the word, have prescribed them, by way of treatment for inward maladies, and they are fully competent to prescribe them. The instructions of Junayd of Baghdād, Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī, Khwāja Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshband, Khwāja Mu'in ad-Dīn Chishtī, Shaykh Aḥmad Mujaddid Alf-e-thani etc are worthy of being carried into effect. The reason for following their instructions is that these great Muslim saints hold the rank of *mujtahid-i muntasb*, or *mujtahid fī 'l-madhhab* or *ahl-i tarjīḥ*, and all of them (and other saints of their rank) are regarded as spiritual guides and leaders of the Muslims.

Their works on devotion, the Sufi path, on the reality of Unity and Divine gnosis are well known and are in use. They are in full accordance with the Koran, the *ḥadīths*, and with *Fiqh* or 'law'. Their reasoning and the authority for the postures is stated in their works, and where no authority is cited from the Koran or the *ḥadīth*, there is the authority of their individual interpretations. It is like the authority of the interpreters of law (*fiqh*), the basis of which is eventually the Koran and the *ḥadīth* themselves.

The *Ḥadīth* related by Mu'ādh ibn Jabal informs us that:

> When the Prophet of Islam despatched Mu'ādh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he said, 'When a case is submitted to you, how will you decide it?' He said, 'According to the Koran.' The Prophet said, 'If you do not find it in the Koran?' He said, 'According to the approved practice of the Prophet.' Said the Prophet, 'If you do not find it even in the Prophet's *Sunna*?' He said, 'I shall then interpret it in my own way.' The Prophet struck him on his chest with his hand and said, 'Glory to be God, who has so guided the Prophet's agent as to please the Prophet.'

On this authoritative basis, in every Sufi order, the saints who have attained perfection have, in their capacity of the *mujtahid fi'l-madhāhib*, established the truth in respect to the problems of the Unity of God and devotion, in the light of the Koran and *ḥadīth*, or have expressed their opinion on the basis of personal inspiration and illumination. The great saints have always regarded the Koran, the *ḥadīth* and the *ijmā'* or 'consensus of the community' as the criterion of the truth of their inspiration. The following saying of the reverend Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī on this point is well known:

> The knowledge or inspiration of reality which is not borne out by the *sharī'a* is either heresy or unbelief or atheism.[25]

Shaykh Abū Sa'īd Kharrāz's saying conveys the same meaning:

> The inward (inspiration, knowledge of reality) which is contrary to the outward (or *sharī'a*) is false.[26]

Thus there is no reason why the interpretation of the great Sufis on the Unity of God and on devotion should not be regarded on par with the interpretation of the jurists in matters of *fiqh*. In every age, all the learned among the orthodox Muslims, Sultans, *amīrs* etc. have agreed unanimously on their sainthood, and have expressed approval of their methods. It is obvious, therefore, that now anyone who rejects the path of devotion, or the *Ṭarīqa* of these great saints

and spiritual leaders, will be regarded as one who rejects the consensus of opinion of all the Muslims. The following sanction of the Koran is sufficient for him who denies the said consensus of opinion:

> If any one contends with the Apostle even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming men of faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and landhim in hell—what an evil refuge.[27]

METHODS OF CLEANSING THE HEART

Now we return to the main topic, *i.e.* the methods of cleansing the heart that were adopted by the Sufis.

The Prophet of Islam has announced the following glad tidings:

> When a servant, who is a true believer, performs ablution (*wuḍū*), and washes his face, all sins which he has committed by looking with his eyes are washed away with the water. When he washes his hands, all sins which he committed by his hands are washed away with the water and when he washes his feet, all sins, which he committed by walking, are removed with the water, and thus he is cleansed of all sins.[28]

During *wuḍū* or 'ablution' the 'witnessing formula' should be recited, or as recommended by Khwājā'Ubaid-ullāh Aḥrār (d. 988 A.H.) in his treatise the *Anfās Nafsiyya*,[29] the prayer *Al-Qādir* should be recited thrice. After finishing the ablution, the following prayer may be said once:

> I bear witness that there is no other object worthy of worship save *Allāh*, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Apostle. O *Allāh*, make me like those who turn to Thee constantly, include me among those who keep themselves pure and clean, make me like the righteous servants and include me among those who have no fear, and who grieve not.[30]

After reciting the above prayer, one should stand up, and after drinking a little water out of the water for ablution, say:

> O *Allāh*, cure me with Thy remedy, heal me with Thy healing, and keep me safe from weakness, diseases, sufferings and pains.

After reciting the above prayer, one should perform two *rak'as* and while doing so he should negate all the affections of his heart and should concentrate on the proximity of God, as has been said by the Prophet:

> When one who believes, performs the ablution thoroughly and getting up says two *rak'as* of prayers with presence of mind, the remuneration for it is Heaven.[31]

Khwāja Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshband has said, 'In this prayer we should observe closely the prescribed orders of performing the prayer', and this has been emphasized for the beginner. There is great reward for prayer after the ablution. Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī has said, 'this prayer could be said at all times'. But Shaykh Muḥyi ad-Dīn Ibn Arabi says that prayer should not be said during forbidden hours, and the same is in accordance with the findings of the *'ulamā* of the Naqshbandiyya Order. After the prayer is over, one should recite the following prayer thrice with the intention of asking God's forgiveness:

> I ask forgiveness of God for my sins. There is none worthy of worship except God—the Living, the self-subsisting, Eternal. I turn to Him.[32]

Before going to bed one should sit attentively in bed facing the Qibla and recite the verse *'Āyat al Kursī'* (or the verse of the Throne) and the 'Apostle Believeth', (S. II 285, 286) and blowing on the hands rub them over the limbs of the body and recite thrice, 'I ask forgiveness of God for my sins. There is none worthy of worship except God—the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal—I turn to Him'. The Prophet of Islam used to do so. It is narrated in Abū Sa'īd's tradition that all the sins of a man who asks forgiveness thus at bed-time are forgiven. After asking forgiveness, he should busy himself in recollecting God and when overcome by sleep should go to bed; his face should be turned towards Mecca and the palm of his right hand placed under his cheek and he should recite the following prayer thrice:[33]

> O Allah I entrust my life unto Thee, turn my face towards Thee and surrender my affairs to Thee, and I trust Thee; I bow to thee and desire Thy reward, and fear Thy punishment. There is no shelter from Thy punishment except Thee. I believe in what hath been revealed in Thy book and to Thy Prophet whom thou hast sent.
>
> O Allah, wake me up at the hour which is dearest to Thee, and employ me for the acts that are better, so that I may attain Thy proximity and be remote from Thy displeasure.
>
> O Allah, do not let me feel secure from Thy plan, do not entrust me to Thy other, do not make me forget Thy *Dhikr* and do not make me forgetful of Thee.

After these prayers Maulānā Ya'qūb Charkhī insists that the devotee should say the midnight prayers. In this connection he says, 'Khwāja Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshband has said to me, 'Before morning engage yourself in contemplation.' By this he meant *tahajjud* or midnight prayer. In the beginning of his mystic state, the Prophet of Islam was wont to wake up in the early hours of dawn and say the prayer. In this early stage, this prayer was obligatory for him. Some are of the opinion that in the latter part of his life this prayer was not obligatory, but he kept on performing it as a supererogatory act. Some hold that this prayer was obligatory for him in the latter part of his life also. Those who rise for their midnight prayer have been highly praised in the Koran:

> As to the Righteous they will be in the midst of gardens and springs, taking joy in the things which their Lord gives them, because, before then, they lived a good life. They were in the habit of sleeping but little by night, and in the hours of early dawn, they were found praying for forgiveness . . .[34]

That is the reason why it has been narrated in the *hadīth* that the following sentences be repeated as often as possible: 'O God, grant us forgiveness, have mercy on us and turn unto us (in mercy) for Thou art the Oft-returning, most Merciful'.

In praise of those who rise for midnight prayers, the Koran says:

> Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in fear and hope; and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which we have bestowed on them. Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them —as a reward for (all good) deeds.[35]

According to Tirmidhī, the Prophet of Islam would often say to his companions: 'You should rise for midnight prayers, because it has been the practice of the righteous before you. This is the cause of the Almighty God's Proximity and Mercy. It is also the cause of atonement of sins and also saves us from sins'.

Yet in another *hadīth* it is narrated:

> The devotee is closest to the mercy of his Lord in that part of the night which just preceeds dawn. If it is possible for thee, be among those who remember God at that time.[36]

And a great Sufi, Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l-Khayr expresses the importance of midnight prayer in the following quatrain:

> Rise at night for lovers have a secret at night,
> They fly around the door and terrace of the Friend.
> Wheresoever there is a door, it is closed in the night,
> Except the door of the Friend which is left open in the night.[37]

On waking up in the night, the Prophet first cleansed his teeth with *miswāk*,[38] and after performing the ablution recited the following verses:

> Behold! in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alteration of the day and the night, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praise of God standing, sitting and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and earth (with the thought): 'Our Lord! not for naught hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire. Our Lord! Any whom Thou dost admit in the Fire, truly Thou coverest him with shame, and never will wrong-doers find any helpers! Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, "Believe ye in the Lord", and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous. Our Lord! Grant us what Thou didst promise us through Thine Apostles, and save us from shame on the Day of Judgment, for Thou never breakest Thy promise.'[39]

The Prophet would then recite the following prayers:

> O Allah! Thou alone art worthy of all praise, the Sustainer of the earth and heavens and all that is between them. Thou alone deservest all praise, Thou alone art the Sovereign of the earth and heavens and of all that is between them. All praise is due to Thee alone. Thou alone brightenest all that which is between the earth and the heavens. Thou alone art worthy of all praise; Thou alone art the Fact and Reality. True is Thy promise, Thy beholding is a Fact, and Thy book is veracious. Heaven is a reality and Hell is a fact. All Apostles are a reality and Muḥammad is a reality and Doomsday a fact. O Allah! I obey Thee only, believe in Thee only and trust Thee alone, I turn to Thee alone, I fight against those who stand against Faith by Thy help alone, and submit grievance before Thee alone. Forgive all those sins of mine which I committed before and later, which I committed secretly and openly, the sins which Thou knoweth more than I. Thou alone canst make me advance forward and Thou alone canst make me tarry behind. Thou alone art the one Reality worthy of worship.

Then one should perform two *rak'as*. According to Khwāja 'Ubaydallāh Aḥrār,[40] one should then recite the following three times with all humility and faith:

> O Allah! I return to Thee from every evil and sin committed by me, either knowingly or unknowingly. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship save Allah, and bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Apostle.

After that one should recite the *istighfār* or formula of penitence in all humility and faith a hundred times:

> I ask forgiveness of my Lord for all sins which I have committed, knowingly and unknowingly, secretly and openly, and I turn to Him alone from the sin I know, and the sin I do not know. It is Thou who knowest in full all that is hidden.

After this one should begin the midnight prayer. It consists of twelve *rak'as*, performed two at a time. In the first two *rak'as*, after the *Sūra Fātiha* (the opening sura of the Koran), the *āyat al-Kursī*[41] should be recited, and in the second two *rak'as*, the verse beginning with *The Apostle Believeth* should be recited. With the rest of the eight *rak'as* of prayer, the *Sūra Yā-Sīn*[42] should be recited; ten of its verses in every *rak'a*. (Some have recited the entire *Sūra Yā-Sīn* in every *rak'a*.) In the last *rak'a*, the *Sūra* of *Ikhlāṣ* (Sura CXII of the Koran) should be recited thrice. This has been the practice of Khwāja Yūsuf Abū Ayyūb Hamadhānī (535 A.H. 1140 A.D.) who is the preceptor of the Khwājas of the Naqshbandiyya Order of Sufis. After that one should perform two more *rak'as* sitting, so that the total may come to thirteen *rak'as*, because performing two *rak'as* in the sitting posture is regarded as performing one *rak'a*. The reason for doing so is that the number of the *rak'as* performed should be an odd one, for God is single and the odd number suggests this singleness.

Khwāja 'Azīzān 'Alī Rāmitīnī (d. 715 A.H. 1315 AD), who is of the Naqshbandiyya Order, and who was a leading saint, would often say,

> When three hearts come together, i.e., the heart of the night (midnight), the heart of the Koran (*Sūra Yā-Sīn*) and the heart of one who believes, then the believer achieves his object.[43]

If one does not have time, eight or four or even two *rak'as* can be performed,[44] and if one cannot perform them for one reason or another, one should say the neglected prayers before mid-day. Khwāja Ubayd-allāh Aḥrār insists on reciting the following prayers after the prayer is over:

> O Allah! bestow upon us Thy love, and the love of those who love Thee, and the love of the deeds too which confer on us Thy Proximity.

And then,

> O Allah! help us and those who help religion and those who help religious people. O Allah! do not help those who help neither religion nor men of religion. O Allah! keep us safe from ailments . . . O Most Merciful and Benevolent Allah! turn unto us, so that we may turn to Thee, and keep us safe from turning towards sins. Make Thy obedience for us dear, and our sins disliked, by Thy grace and mercy, O most merciful Allah! Peace and blessings on Muḥammad and his companions and his descendants.

The Khwāja instructs that one should dedicate the reward of the thirteen *rak'as* to all the saints, to one's parents and all the followers of the Prophet. One should also invoke Divine blessings on the departed souls and ask for God's grace and mercy. For oneself, one should ask nothing of Him but Himself. As the famous Persian poet Jāmī says:

> The urge of my life is to serve Thee only,
> For the God-conscious a moment without Thee is verily a sin!
> Everyone asks of Thee whatever his heart desires,
> What Jāmī, however, asks of Thee is nothing but Thee alone.

The same is conveyed by the following prayer:

> What I ask of Thee is that I may ask of Thee nothing but Thyself.

After performing the midnight prayer, the devotee should busy himself in the *dhikr* which his spiritual guide has taught him.

At dawn, the prescribed morning prayer (*sunna*) should be done at home. In the first *rak'a* one should recite the *Sūra al-Kāfirūn* and in the second, the *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ*. One should then recite the following prayer seventy times:

> O God! give us forgiveness, have mercy on us and turn unto us (in mercy) for Thou art the Oft-returning, most Merciful.

And for the enlightenment of the heart he should recite the following prayer forty-one times:

> O Allah! the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, the Living, the Self-Sustaining, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour! There is nothing worthy of worship save Thee. I ask of Thee to enliven my heart with the light of Thy knowledge everlastingly, Allah, Allah, Allah![45]

To perform the obligatory morning prayer (farḍ), one should go to the mosque and on the way recite:

> I ask of God to forgive all my sins which He dislikes—sins committed by words, or deeds, or by thinking and beholding.

On entering the mosque he should put in his right foot first and say:

> In the name of God, to God be praise and peace and blessing on the Prophet of God. O God! forgive me and open for me the door of Thy mercy.[46]

After the morning prayer is over, the disciple should remain seated on the prayer mat and busy himself in contemplation until sun-rise. Now he should say the prayer of Sun-rise (*Ishrāq*) and in every *rak'a* recite the *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ* five times.

The Prophet has said:

> He who says the morning prayer in congregation, and is seated there afterwards until he says the sun-rise prayer, will be entitled to the same reward as a person who has performed the greater and the lesser pilgrimage (Ḥajj and 'Umra).

And then he should say the prayers of *Istikhāra*, and beseech God for success in his affairs of that day. God Almighty will open his heart and eyes towards good. The Prophet has narrated the following revelation by God:

> O ye son of Adam! Do not feel tired to say four *rak'as* of prayers at sunrise. I will be thy sufficient refuge till the day is over.

Maulānā Yā'qūb Charkhī used to enjoin upon his disciples that after performing two *rak'as* of sunrise prayer, they should recite the following hymn ten times:

> There is none worthy of worship save God, with whom there is no partner, His is the Dominion, and He has power over all things.

Saifaddīn Bākhozī had instructed his disciples to recite the above *dhikr*.[47]

After coming out of the mosque he should say,

> O Allah! I ask of Thy grace

and keep repeating this until he reaches home. If he is able to read the Koran, then he should place the Koran before him and read as much as he likes. If he is a student, he should busy himself with studies, and if he is a *sālik* (a devotee on the Sufi path), he should busy himself with remembrance and contemplation of God until the sun rises high and the earth gets warm. He should then perform *salāt al-Ḍuhā* or the midday prayer. This consists of twelve *rak'as*.

Khwāja Aḥrār says that four *rak'as* of the prayer of the middle hour between sunrise and noon should be performed, and in the first *rak'a, after Sūra al-Fātiḥa*, the *Sūra ash-Shams* (Sura VXCI) should be recited; in the second, *Wa'l-Lail* (Sura XCII), in the third, *Ḍuhā* (Sura XCIII) and in the fourth *rak'a, Inshirāḥ* (Sura XCIV) should be recited. After the prayer is over one should make an obeisance and recite *Al-Wakhāb* seven times. By doing so the heart is cleansed and the love of other than God is expelled from it.[48]

Whenever *wuḍū* 'ablution' becomes necessary again one should do it again. After it one should say the relevant prayers. These are the *ādāb* (rules of the journey to God).

The midday prayers should be said in congregation and the 'repentance formula' should be recited thrice, and 'I ask God forgiveness . . .' should be said seventy times so that we may be able to act according to the *ḥadīth* in which it is said:

> Oblivion pervades my heart and I ask forgiveness of God seventy times in a day.[49]

One should not indulge in idle gossip and at night offer the *'Ishā* prayers. All these acts and prayers are by the way of abstinence, so that the evil matter may be purged out by the aspirant and all the matter which has entered the system by way of the carnal self may be expelled and one may attain salvation.[50]

NOTES:

1. *Koran*, XXIII, 41
2. *Koran*, III, 191
3. *Koran*, XXIX, 45.
4. *Koran*, II, 152.
5. *Koran*, XXXIII, 36.
6. *Koran*, XX, 14.
7. *Koran*, LIX, 19.
8. *Koran*, XLIII, 36.
9. *Koran*, LVIII, 19.
10. *Koran*, XXIV, 37.
11. Many say from personal experience that this is quite correct, that once you are into *dhikr*, even when you are not 'consciously' doing it, you will discover that it goes on within you anyway. This is the basis of the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad. His wife 'A'isha tells us that even when his eyes (i.e. the Prophet's) slept, his heart did not sleep. It was busy with the remembrance of God. There is a stage in meditation when you will be able to hear this dhikr going on constantly. It is only in the beginning that you have to repeat it consciously.

12. *Koran*, LXXIII, 8.
13. Malik and Ahmad. This shows how crucial and absolutely important the remembering of the divine Name constantly (*dhikr*) is in Sufi Islam, and indeed for Islam generally.
14. Bukhārī and Muslim.
15. Bukhārī. Cf. the Koran II 186: *And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me . . .* Rūmī says that in fact the supplicant's invocation of God is essentially the same thing as God's response to him. According to Rūmī, Khidr spoke to such a supplicant, '(God saith) . . . Beneath every "O Lord" of thine is many a "Here am I" (from Me)'. Vid., Rice, Cyprian, O.P., *The Persian Sufis*, London 1964, 90.
16. Bukhārī.
17. Shāh Walīallah, quoted from *Intibāh fi Salāsil-i-Auliyā*, printed at Ahmadi Press, Madrasa-i-Azizi, Delhi, p. 94.
18. Vid., Chapter II, note 20 above.
19. This is one of the acts of practical piety in Islam, often called the 'five pillars of Islam'. The *ṣalāt (namāz)* or daily ritual prayer is performed five times a day by every Muslim.
20. This is a reference to the so called Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God in the Koran. These play a very important role in the mystical theories of the Sufis, and particularly in their life of prayer.
21. In the religious sense, the word *shahāda* is the Muslim profession of faith: 'there is no god but God; Muḥammad is the Prophet of God'. It is one of the five pillars of Islam. It forms a very important Sufi *dhikr*, e.g. Shaikh Aḥmad al-'Alawi of North Africa (d. 1934) used to make the novice recite the first part of the *shahāda* seventy-five thousand times before putting him onto the *dhikr* of the Divine Name (Allah). Vid., *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century* by Martin Lings, University of California Press, 1971, 85.
22. Tirmidhī. Also note 21 above.
23. Imām ibn Taimiyya, (d. 1328) in his work *Al-'ubūdiyat* (translated into Urdu by Mir Waliullah, under the title of *Bandagi*. It was printed at Kashi Ram Press, Lahore, 1922, 137-140.) writes: 'The repetition of the Name of the Essence (Allah), without joining it with other words is an innovation. God has not commanded anybody to repeat a single name, neither has He prescribed any single individual name for the Muslims . . . The repetition of a single individual name does not promote faith. The Prophet's Traditions prove that we have been instructed to recite compound words, e.g. *Subḥān Allāh* (Glory be to God), *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* (Praise be to God) etc.' Ibn Taimiyya is regarded as one of the most learned and sincere scholars in Islam, yet the Koranic verses and the Prophetic *ḥadīths* that we quote on p. 61 do not support his view, so that in this case he may be committing an error.
24. Both these *ḥadīths* are related by Muslim.
25. *Futūḥ al-Ghaib*, Chapter 40.
26. Quoted from *Intibāh fi Salāsil-i-Auliyā Allāh*, Shāh Walīallāh, Ahmadi Press, Delhi, p. 55.
27. *Koran*, IV, 115.
28. Muslim.
29. *Anfās Nafiyya* by Khwāja 'Ubaydallāh Ahrār, included in the *Rasāil Sitta-daruria*. The Khwāja was a member of the Naqshbandiyya Order of Sufis. He was the 'Axis' or 'pivot' (*quṭb*) of his age, and the renewer of Islam at the beginning of the ninth century. He died 1790 AD.

30. Professor A. Schimmel comments that all these prayers are efficacious only in Arabic, the language of revelation in Islam.
31. Muslim.
32. *Koran*, II, 255. This is indeed one of the most beautiful passages in the Koran.
33. *Koran*, II, 285, 286. These two verses of the Koran contain both the creed of Islam, as well as one of the most beautiful prayer passages in the Koran. Then, 'I ask forgiveness of God for my sins. There is none worthy of worship except God — the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. I turn to Him'.
34. *Koran*, LI, 15-18.
35. *Koran*, XXXII, 16, 17.
36. Other traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism also stress the immense good of pre-dawn meditation.
37. For a life of this beautiful mystic, Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l-Khayr, see R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, 1967, 1-77. Fritz Meier, *Abū Sa'īd-i Abu'l-Hair*, Leiden-Paris, 1976.
38. This is a toothbrush made out of a thin branch of a tree. It is still found in use in villages in India and Pakistan today, and in Africa.
39. *Koran* III, 190-194.
40. In his *Risāla-i Anfās Nafsiyya*, pp. 3-4, 15.
41. *Koran*, II, 255.
42. *Koran*, XXXVI.
43. *Risāla-i-Unsiyya*, p. 32.
44. *Risāla-i-Anfās Nafsiyya*, p. 6.
45. This is according to the Naqshbandiyya Order, other Sufi orders may differ in the set prayers.
46. In another Tradition we have been taught to say:

    O God! open for us the door of mercy and make easy for us the entrance into the doors of Your Sustenance (Ibn Mājā).

47. *Risāla-i-Unsiyya*, 23.
48. *Risāla-i-Anfās Nafsiyya*, 17.
49. Bukhārī.
50. *Anfās Nafsiyya*, 7.

CHAPTER IV

Methods of Dhikr: The Qādiriyya and Naqshbandiyya Orders

Remembrance of God is food for the soul,
It is a salve for the wounded heart. ('Aṭṭār)

After knowing the great importance of *dhikr* as stated in the Koran and the *ḥadīth*, let us look at some of the different methods of *dhikr* delineated by the great Sufi Shaykhs. The Sufis have used *dhikr jalī* or 'loud, vociferous' *dhikr*, and *dhikr khafī* meaning 'silent' *dhikr*. These Shaykhs are the heads of the various *silsilas* or 'orders' of the *Ṭarīqa* (the Sufi Path). Here we describe some *dhikrs* which are in use in some of the better known orders.

> My tongue and heart are overjoyed by His recollection,
> And what is man except heart and tongue?

THE QADIRIYYA ORDER

The founder Imām of this Order is Sayyid Muḥammad Muhyi ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī, who died in 1266 at the age of ninety.

In this Order the *dhikr* is done loudly (i.e. it is voiced) but not so loudly as to come into conflict with the *ḥadīth* related by Abū Mūsā Ash'arī:

> O People! do not tax yourselves (i.e. say it gently), you are not addressing any unseeing or deaf being. You are calling the Being who is listening to you, seeing you, and who is with you. The One Whom you are addressing is nearer to you than the neck of your camel.[1]

The main *dhikr* in this Order consists of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*. Its method of performance is as follows:

The *dhākir* (the devotee who is performing the *dhikr*) should sit with flexed knees, as in the posture of prayer, facing the *Qibla* (the direction of Mecca, to which all Muslims turn in prayer), and should close his eyes. He should say the word *Lā* drawing the sound as from

his navel, pull it up to his shoulders, and then say *ilāha* drawing the sound from his brain. After that, he should strike,[2] i.e. impress the words *illā Allāh* with great force on the heart, thinking that none save God is the Beloved, and that God alone is the Real Being and is the ultimate End and Object of all life. He should posit or direct all this for the Holy Essence of the Almighty God alone. The devotee who is a beginner will negate and posit belovedness; the devotee who occupies the middle stage will negate that any save God is the goal and object of life; and the adept will negate and posit existence. These negations and affirmations are meant to suit the mental states of the one who calls God to remembrance. This is the first stage in the cleansing of the heart.

> Unless thou sweepest the path with the broomstick of 'None' (*Lā*)
> Thou canst not reach the stage of 'Save God' (*illā Allāh*)

THE DHIKR OF THE NAME OF THE ESSENCE: ALLAH:

The name of the Essence, i.e. *Allāh*, is also recollected and recited loudly, in one of the following ways:

1. *Dhikr with one ḍarb (or stroke)*: The *dhākir* should utter the gracious name of *Allāh* with the strength of the heart and the throat forcibly, loudly, prolonging it.[3] He may then stop to gather breath, and then continue the *dhikr* for as long as possible. It is a very simple, but effective and beautiful *dhikr*.

2. *Dhikr with two ḍarb*: The *dhākir* should sit in the posture of prayer (*vajrasan* in terms of yoga), facing the *Qibla*, and recite the name of *Allāh*, turning once on his left side, and for the second time strike or impress it on the heart, and should go on repeating it without break. The stroke should be applied with full vigour so that the heart may be affected and then become tranquil, and the distractions and evil suggestions may be dispelled.

3. *Dhikr with three ḍarb or strokes*: The *dhākir* should sit square. He should apply this stroke once on the right knee, next on the left knee and finally on the heart. The third stroke must be more vigorous and louder.

4. *Dhikr with four ḍarb*: the *dhākir* should sit square. He should apply the strokes first on the right knee, next towards the left knee, for the third time towards the heart, and lastly in front of him. The last *ḍarb* should be a prolonged and forcible one.

It may here be necessary to mention that the different postures and

methods of *dhikr*, which the Shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqa* have worked out, are based on their interpretations. Through them, they want to develop in the *dhākir* selflessness, humility, submission[4] sometimes, and peace of mind and joy at other times. Moreover, they had in view the psychological truth also that man involuntarily pays attention to different directions, and to the sounds produced from different directions. Thus by means of different postures and positions, they intended to prevent the *dhākir* from paying attention to anything save God alone. The Prophet of Islam also has prohibited the Muslims from standing with hands placed on flanks, as is the posture of rude ones. Standing in this manner often causes lassitude and is inconsistent with zeal in worship. The Shaykhs of the *Ṭarīqa* have evolved different postures for developing concentration on God, to the complete exclusion of all else, and this is for attaining the necessary end, viz., the sensing of the presence of God and presence with God. They are not therefore contrary to the *Sharī'a*.

However, when the good effects of *dhikr jalī* or 'loud recollection' appear in the *dhākir*, i.e. the fire of longing for God is kindled and the name of the Almighty God gives satisfaction to his heart, and the evil suggestions and mental affectations are wholly dispelled, or are considerably reduced, and when he prefers God to what is other than God, then he is asked to perform *dhikr khafī* or 'silent *dhikr*'. It is said that if the devotee repeats the name *Allāh* four thousand times during the night or day, according to the methods of the loud *dhikr* described above for two months, then these effects are produced, whether the *dhākir* is dull or intelligent.

> Allāh, Allāh is the name of the pure Essence of the Friend.
> This great name is meant for attaining His proximity.
> Allāh, Allāh, what good taste this name reveals,
> Every letter of this word intoxicates life with the wine of love.

Dhikr-i-Khafī or 'silent recollection' of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* may be performed either in the same way as is adopted for the loud recollection, described above, or by the way of controlled respiration. The method employed is that the *dhākir* should be mindful of his breath; when exhaling, he should say *Lā ilāha* silently, in his heart, and when inhaling, say *illā Allāh*, and continue repeating this. This *dhikr* is known as *pās-i-anfās*, or the *dhikr* of guarding respirations.[5] This *dhikr* is highly effective in negating mental affectations and evil suggestions, and has other aspects also.

The silent recollection of the Essence, *Allāh*, together with His

fundamental attributes is performed thus: the *dhākir* should close his eyes and lips, and in his heart, he should repeat, *Allāhu Samī'un* (God is the Hearer), *Allāhu Baṣīrun* (God is the Seer), *Allāhu 'Alīmun* (God is the Knower) by the way of ascension or *'urūj*. He should say *Allāhu Samī'un* with his heart, and imagine that he has ascended from his navel to the chest. Similarly, with saying *Allāhu Baṣīrun* he should sense that he is reaching from his chest to the brain; and while saying *Allāhu 'Alīmun*, he should conceive that he has ascended up to the *'Arsh* or the 'Throne of God'. Again, conversely, while saying *'Allāhu 'Alīmun, Allāhu Baṣīrun* and *Allāhu Samī'un*, the *dhākir* should sense the descent, step by step. Thus, while saying *Allāhu 'Alīmun*, he should sense that he has descended from the Throne to the brain, on saying *Allāhu Baṣīrun* from the brain to the chest, and at the time of saying *Allāhu Samī'un* to have come down from the chest to the navel. This is a rotation which is known as the 'Qādiriyya Rotation' or *Daura-i-Qādiriyya*. He should repeat this continuously.

Some Sufis also add the words *Allāhu Qādirun* (God is Powerful). In that case, the *dhākir* should feel reaching the sky in the third step, and finally, to reach the *'Arsh*.

Dhikr-i-khafī has its own effulgent effects. Some of them are as follows: it lights the fire of longing for God, develops the love of God in the heart, engenders reflection, produces ecstasy in silence, generates dislike for indulgence in wordly affairs and enables the *dhākir* to prefer God to everything else.

When these effects appear in a devotee, the Qādiriyya Shaykhs advise him to contemplate. We shall speak of this in Chapter VI.

In his work, the *Intibāh-fi-salāsil Auliyā Allāh*,[6] Shāh Walīallāh, after speaking of the Qādiriyya method of *dhikr*, says:

> On the same Qādiriyya authority, Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Kurdī in his *Iqāz al Qawābil* has stated as follows:
>
> > The seeker of God, after performing the obligatory prayers and other obligatory acts enjoined upon him, makes the seeking of the nearness to God compulsory on himself, by performing supererogatory acts of worship and by reciting approved sayings as much as possible. This results in the love of God, as the Prophet has related to us from God: 'By no acts does my servant come more close to me than by performing the obligatory prayers and other obligatory acts of worship which I have ordained for him. And by performing supererogatory acts of worship he continues to draw closer to me until I begin to

love him; and when I love him, I become his ears through which he hears, his eyes through which he sees, his hands through which he holds, his feet through which he walks.'

In addition to this *ḥadīth* by Bukhārī, there is another version which adds:

> I become his heart through which he understands, and his tongue through which he talks. Now, whoever desires to act upon all this, should recollect God by performing *dhikr*; and engrossed in his affairs should not become one of the forgetful ones. The best *dhikr* of course is *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*.

After quoting the passage of Shaykh Ibrāhīm, Shāh Walīallāh says:

> If a man is single, and is not involved in any kind of worry, he should be engaged in *dhikr* daily. If he is one who makes use of the law of causation, i.e. he is engaged in the affairs of the world, he should appoint for himself according to his leisure set forms of prayers and litanies.

Next, he has spoken of set forms of prayers and litanies of the High Qādiriyya Order. We give an account of them here, since they are included in *dhikr* in its wide sense, and can be of great help to the busy man of today. They provide necessary nourishment to his starved spirit, bring peace to his worried mind and create contentment in his anxious heart. He is caught in the clutches of his desires, and forgetting the recollection of the Most Merciful, is usually ensnared in the trap of attachment and does not even know it.

> The cunning of Diabolus is due to thy cunning,
> Every single desire in thee is Diabolus for thee.
> When thou fulfillest one desire of thine,
> A hundred Diaboluses are created in thee.

Such a man though apparently alive, is inwardly dead, and

> The heart that is not alive in this world by the remembrance of God,
> Go and on the basis of my legal opinion say funeral prayers for him.

The set forms of prayers and litanies of the Qādiriyya Order recommended for those who occupy a middle stage are as follows:[7]

1. Repeating *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, morning and evening and after

midnight prayer a thousand times, and if this is not possible, then as many times as is possible.

2. Repeating *Istighfār* (seeking forgiveness of God) a hundred times after the morning, evening and midnight prayers. If one asks forgiveness of God twenty-seven times daily after morning prayer on behalf of believing folk, it would be in pursuance of the following *ḥadīth:*

> He who daily asks forgiveness of God twenty-seven times on behalf of believing men and women, will be included among them whose prayers are answered, and due to whom those who live on earth receive their sustenance.

3. After the *Fajr* or 'dawn' prayers, the devotee should recite:

> There is none worthy of worship except God, who has no partner, His is the Dominion, He gives and takes life, in His Hand is good and He has power over all things,

ten times. It would be better if this is recited after every obligatory (*farḍ*) prayer.

4. The following *Durūd* 'prayer for Muḥammad' should be recited after the obligatory dawn and afternoon or *'Aṣr* prayers daily ten times:

> O Allah, bless Muhammad, his descendants and his companions, according to the number of Thy creatures and for the period of Thy everlastingness.

After the tenth recitation, the following words should be added:

> Bless all the prophets and apostles and their descendants and companions and their followers and the righteous ones of the heavens and the earth, and bless us also along with them, O thou Most Merciful of the merciful. Bless them from among Thy creatures and in the measure of Thy pleasure by the excellence of Thy Throne, and the vastness of Thy knowledge, whenever Thou art remembered by Thy devotees or forgotten by forgetful people.

It would be better if the above is repeated ten times after each obligatory prayer.

5. After every obligatory prayer, the *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ*[8] should be recited ten times.

6. Two *rak'as* of Sunrise (*Chāsht*) prayer should be performed and in it *Sūra ash-Shams* (S. XCI) and *Lail* (S. XCII) should be recited, and after it, one should say ten times:

> Glory to God, praise be to God. There is none worthy of worship

> except God, God is great. There is no motion or power save in God, the High, the Great, in the court of God's creatures and for the period of God's everlastingness.

7. *Sūras Yā-sīn* (XXXVI) and *Mulk* (XC) should be recited every morning and evening.

8. *Ḥā-Mīm Sajda* (S. XLI) should be recited after sunset (*Maghrib*) prayers.

9. If one does not have the time to recite *Yā-sīn*, still one should recite *Ḥā-Mīm Sajda* and *Mulk* without fail.

10. After the sunset prayers, six *rak'as* of supererogatory prayers (*awwābīn*) should be performed. After two of them the following prayer should be recited:

> Welcome to the angels of the night, welcome to the kind recording angels. God bless Ye! In my record write that I declare that there is none worthy of worship except God who has no partner. I declare that Muḥammad is His servant and His Apostle. I declare that Paradise is a verity, and the fire of Hell is a verity, Death is a verity and the questioning in the grave is a verity, the Day of Resurrection is a verity, the Account Taking is a verity, intercession is a verity; I declare that in the given hour God will cause the dead to rise from the graves. O God! to Thee I entrust this declaration for the day of my need. O God! for its sake, lessen my load; forgive my sin; make heavy the scale of my good acts; make me deserving of safety, and forgive my faults, through Thy mercy, O Merciful of the merciful.

After the above prayer two more *rak'as* of *awwābīn* should be performed with the intention of *hifẓ-i-īmān* (preservation of faith) and after it is done, pray as follows:

> O God! preserve me with faith in Thee, and preserve it in my life, when I die and after my death.

This above has been given by Shaykh Muḥyi ad-Dīn ibn 'Arabī. In the chapter 'Bāb al-Waṣāyā' of his work *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, he says:

> In (the remaining) every *rak'a* of this prayer *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ* (CXII) should be recited six times, and *Sura al-Falaq* (CXIII) and *Sura al-Nās* (CXIV) once.

Then two *rak'as Istikhāra* (seeking good from God) prayers should be performed, which saints say daily for the better performance of the day and night's work. After it is over, the following *Istikhāra* hymn should be recited:

> O Allah: I seek good with Thy knowledge and seek power from Thy power and seek Thy grace, for it is Thou who hast power, not I; it is Thou who knowest, not I; and it is Thou who knowest in full what is hidden. O Allah! I have no control over what is good, or bad for myself; nor can I control death nor life, nor resurrection. I cannot have anything unless Thou givest it to me, nor can I protect myself unless Thou protectest me. O Allah! guide me to that which Thou likest of deeds, or words, so that they be done or said with ease and safety. O Allah! choose for me what Thou likest, and do not leave it for my choice! O Allah! let what I say or do this day or night be good for me!

In respect to the above prayers, Shaykh Akbar says, 'We have tried them and found immense good in them.'

11. After the five obligatory prayers, the following verses and prayers should be regularly recited. They are called 'Aurād-e-Qādiriyya'.

1) O Allah! Thou art the source of peace and perfection, from Thee comes peace and to Thee it returns! Keep us alive with peace, enter us into the Home of peace. Blessed be our Lord, and high above all, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour.
2) *Sūra al-Fātiḥa* (the opening chapter of the Koran).
3) And your God is one God: There is no God but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful (Koran II, 163).
4) *Ayat al-Kursī* (the verse of the Throne, Koran II, 255).
5) *The Apostle believeth* . . . until the end of the sura (Koran II, 285, 286).
6) There is none worthy of worship save God: That is the witness of God, His angels, and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is none worthy of worship save He, the Exalted, the Wise. The religion before God is Islam (submission to His Will) (Koran III, 18, 19). I bear witness to what has been witnessed by God, and I entrust this testimony to God, and it is a trust in the care of God.
7) Say: O Allah! Owner of . . . Thou choosest without stint. (Koran III, 26, 27).
8) O God! O Thou who art most Gracious, Most Merciful in both the worlds, have mercy upon me so that I may become free of all wants.
9) Suras of *Ikhlāṣ*, *Falak* and *Nās* (Koran CXII, CXIII, CXIV).
10) *Subḥān Allāh* (Glory to God) (33x); *Alḥamdulillāh* (Praise be to God) (33x); *Allāhu Akbar* (God is Great) (34x).
11) There is none worthy of worship except God, with whom

there is no partner, His is the Dominion, He gives and takes life, in His Hand is good, and He has power over all things.

12) O God! there is none to prevent whom Thou givest, and none to give whom Thou preventeth, none can keep back what Thou hast decided, the wealth of the rich does no good to them; it is Thy favour which benefits us; there is no power or motion except in God, the High, the Great.

13) God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet, O ye that believe! send ye blessings on him and salute him with all respect. (Koran XXXIII, 56).

14) *Durūd* or prayer for Muḥammad.

15) (Pray for what one desires and then continue . . .) 'Glory to Thee Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power. (He is free) from what they ascribe to Him.' (Koran XXXVII, 180).

16) *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (10x).

After the morning prayers, the following prayer should also be repeated eleven times daily:

> O Allah! the One and Only, the Munificent! Blow on me Thy good breeze, Thou hast power over all things.

The method of beginning the above prayer schedule is as follows (one should begin it on a Thursday):

1. First blessings of God should be invoked on Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, and all the past and present Shaykhs, as has been ordered by the early theologians.

2. *Yā 'Azīz* to be repeated 41 times.

3. 'O the self-sustaining Eternal, nothing is lost from Thy knowledge and Thou feelest no fatigue.' (27x).

4. 'Glory to God and all praise to Him, Glory to God, the Great.' To be repeated 100 times.

If possible, the *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ* should be repeated a thousand times, *Durūd* a thousand times and 'There is none worthy of worship except God, with whom there is no partner, His is the Dominion, He has power over all things' a thousand times, and 'Glory to God and all praise to Him' a thousand times daily in the morning.

This is the epitome of the various prayers and litanies which are customary among the Sufis of the Qādiriyya Order (May God sanctify their honoured spirits), for the cleansing of the heart and the purification of the self. In addition, the study of the excellent work *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* by Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, and acting upon it, will be of great benefit.

THE NAQSHBANDIYYA ORDER

The Imām of this Order is Khwāja Bahā ad-Dīn Naqshband of Bukhārā. He died in 1390 AD. This Order was propagated in India from two directions and through the agency of two Saints, *viz.*, Khwāja Baqī-billāh and Amīr 'Abdul 'Alī, while Maulānā Khwāja was instrumental for spreading this Order in the Transoxus, or the Māwarā an-Nahār region. According to the writings of the Sufis of this Order and their practices, the most famous branch is the 'Jamiah Branch'. Arising from Khwāja Bāqī-billāh's teachings, the Order divided itself into many branches. Out of them two are renowned:

1. Shaykh Muḥammad Ma'sūm's branch
2. Shaykh Adam Bijnūrī's branch.[9]

In this Order, it is believed that one's leisure is precious and should not be wasted, but rather it should be spent in performing the *dhikr* of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh.*

> Attach no value to anything that thou hast lost,
> But thou shouldst never lose thy time.

To begin with, one should dispel from one's heart all distractions, like listening to people's idle talk, or taking interest in mundane things.

> If thou desirest to cleanse thy heart, close thy eyes to the world,
> This is the hole through which comes dust.

The *dhākir* should also free his heart from all things that may cause internal perplexities, for instance anger, hunger, gluttonness, or anguish of any kind.

He should then recollect his death, and keep it in view. He should ask forgiveness of God with humility, for his sins of commission and omission; and then he should roll his tongue towards his palate. Shutting his lips and eyes, he should retain his breath in his abdomen, he should utter the word *Lā*, drawing it from the navel to the heart, and take it to the brain. Then while saying the word *ilāha*, he should move his head to his left shoulder and from there apply the *ḍarb*, i.e. impress the words *illā Allāh* vigorously on the heart in such a manner that the effects of the *ḍarb* may manifest themselves in all the limbs. The form of *dhikr* in this case is like the inverted letter *La* (*ν*).

BRAIN

HEART NAVEL

The *dhākir* should negate his own ego and instead posit the Being of God, and say with all sincerity:

> O Allah! Thou art my ultimate End and it is Thy pleasure that I seek.

There should be no movement of the body. He should be mindful of the odd number every time he restrains his breath; he should say: 'Muḥammad is the Apostle of God' when he exhales and while holding the breath, he should recite this *dhikr* first once, then three times (thus keeping in view the odd number). After a few days' practice he should be able to repeat it twenty-one times. If, after repeating the *dhikr* twenty-one times the heart is not turned towards God, and is not attracted by His love, the *dhākir* should begin it over again, carefully observing the conditions mentioned above, and gradually advance to repeating it twenty-one times. In the *dhikr* of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* the most important condition is the negation of the idea that there is any object worthy of worship except God, or any object which may be regarded as the ultimate goal and object of life except God, or any object possessing real existence or being except God. These should be affirmed for God alone.

It is the experience of the Naqshbandiyya Shaykhs that the holding of the breath has wonderful properties of dispelling the affectations of the heart, kindling the fire of love, developing singleness of purpose and creating internal warmth. Restraining the breath should be practised gradually, so that it may not prove too much for the *dhākir*, and cause dryness of the brain. In restraining the breath, moderation is always recommended. Shāh Waliallāh has explained that we should not think that the Naqshbandiyya method of restraining the breath is necessarily adopted from the yoga system. The Yogi restrains his breath for long periods, while the Sufis' restraining of breath is done in moderation.

Similarly, in their experience, regard for odd numbers (which is called *wuqūf al-'adudī* or 'numerical awareness') has also wonderful properties. Every *dhākir* will experience it one day, but it requires patience and perseverance.

In the Naqshbandiyya Order, the two-*ḍarb* (strokes) and the four-*ḍarb dhikrs* of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* are also practised. While practising them, the *dhākir* of this Order should conceive the Prophet on his right side and his preceptor or Sufi Shaykh on his left; and facing the heart is the Almighty God alone, the Absolute Being.

How else can I keep my heart and eyes busy!
The heart seeks Thee and the eye wants Thee alone!

Another *dhikr* of the Naqshbandī Sufis is called *Dhikr al-Mashy al-aqdām*, i.e. 'recollecting God while walking'. According to it, if the devotee is walking with a medium pace, he should say '*Allāh*', '*Allāh*' at every step; if he is walking fast, he should say *illā Allāh*. If his pace is slow, he should say *Lā* when on his right step, and when on his left step *ilāha*; again *illā* on the right step, and *Allāh* on the left step. Some hold that it is better that he should say only *Allāh, Allāh* every time, so that he may be accustomed to one *dhikr* only and his mind may not be confused.

One of the *dhikrs* of the Naqshbandi Shaykhs is the *Dhikr al-Ithbāt al-Mujarrad* or *dhikr* of 'mere affirmation', that is, the *dhikr* of the name *Allāh*, without affirmation or negation. It is said that the early Naqshbandi theologians did not practise this *dhikr*. It has been the practice of Khwāja Bāqī-billāh, or the great Shaykhs who preceeded him. It is agreed that the *dhikr* of affirmation and negation is good for devotion, *sulūk*, and that of mere affirmation is more conducive to absorption in God (*jazb*).

According to some Sufis the method of *dhikr al-Ithbāt al-Mujarrad* is this: the devotee should pull the word *Allāh* from his navel and should draw it up to the brain with all his strength, all the while restraining his breath; he should gradually extend the time of restraining the breath and meanwhile increase the repetition of the *dhikr*. Some repeat the *dhikr* a thousand times in one breath.[10]

One of the great disciples of the Naqshbandiyya Order is Shaykh Aḥmad of Sirhind, the *Mujaddid Alf ath-thānī*, or 'Renewer of Islam at the beginning of the second millenium of the Islamic era'.[11] After him, this Order became known as the Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya Order. As Shāh Walīallāh says of Aḥmad Sirhindi: 'He is the founder of the second millenium of the Islamic era, and he has put the Muslims under a debt which cannot be repaid. He who denies his saintship is wicked'.

As the great apostles gave new *sharī'a*, so the Mujaddid Alf ath-thanī presented undiscovered secrets of *'irfān* or 'gnosis' and the untapped states and stages of Sufism, which, after the era of the Prophet, no important Sufi had disclosed.[12] This is considered to be the proof of his being called the saviour of Islam. His spiritual guide, Khwāja Bāqī-billāh said about him, 'Miān Shaykh Aḥmad is like the

sun, and before him we fade away and are lost like the stars.' Consequently, when the Khwāja took the vow of fidelity to the Naqshbandiyya Order from him, and after bestowing on him spiritual attention for some time, with permission to give spiritual guidance to disciples and instructed all his followers thus:

> Go with Miān Shaykh Aḥmad, acquire spiritual guidance from him and remain in his company. It is not advisable for me to do so while he is alive.

Truly speaking, he was

> The sun of eternal lordship
> Pearl of the everlasting mine of bounty,
> Leader of the people and chief of the sayyids,
> The *qibla* of faith and essence of the righteous.

The early Sufis had informed us of the *Laṭīfas*[13] of *Qalb* or 'heart' and *Rūḥ* or 'soul' only, and some of them had told us of *Laṭīfa-i-Sirr*. Aḥmad Sirhindi informed us of the five *laṭīfas* in the human breast which are: *Qalb* (heart), *Rūḥ* (soul), *Sirr* (secret), *Khafī* (the hidden or mysterious) and the *Akhfā* (the deeply hidden); and he has drawn attention to the lights they shed and the stages they are capable of. A letter of Khwāja 'Abdul Aḥad, grandson of the Mujaddid, which Shāh Walīallāh has cited in his book, *Intibāh fi-Salāsil-i-Auliyā Allāh* (pp. 61–4), explains them briefly but clearly.

According to the findings of the Mujaddid, a man has ten *laṭīfas* or 'subtle faculties'; out of these, five are concerned with the *'Ālam-i-Amr* or 'the world of command', and five of them are concerned with the *'Ālam-i-Khalq* or 'the world of creation'. By the former he means the world of existence which has been brought into existence by God directly by His word of command, *Kun*[14] or 'Be', while the latter means that which is created gradually by evolution. The former is not material, but the latter is material. The place of the *'Ālam-i-Amr* is above the *'Arsh* (Throne of God), and that of the *'Ālam-i-Khalq* is below the Throne. The faculties or *laṭīfas* of the *'Ālam-i-Amr* are: *Qalb, Rūḥ, Sirr, Khafī, Akhfā*; and the faculties of the *'Ālam-i-Khalq* are the *Nafs* and the four elements: earth, water, air and fire. By the sphere of possibility, *daira-i-imkān*, is meant these two worlds. The upper half of this sphere is above the Throne of God and the lower half is below the Throne. The form of the sphere will be as follows:

Akhfā
Khafī
Sirr
Rūḥ
Qalb
The Throne (*'Arsh*)
Nafs
Fire
Air
Water
Earth

The *laṭīfas* of the *'Ālam-i-Amr* are connected with the inner life of an individual, and as such are located in the body. Their exact location, including that of the *Nafs* (ego) which also belongs to the physical aspect of man, is: the *Nafs* is under the navel, *Qalb* on the left side, *Rūḥ* on the right side of the chest, and the *Sirr* is exactly between the *Qalb* and the *Rūḥ*. *Khafī* is said by some Sufis to be in the forehead, and *Akhfā* in the brain; while others locate *Akhfā* in the middle of the chest, *Sirr* between the *Qalb* and the *Akhfā*, and *Khafī* between *Rūḥ* and *Akhfā*.

The procedure of *dhikr* of *Ism-e-dhāt* (the name of the Essence) is that one should touch the palate with the tongue, and keep in mind the meaning of the blessed name *Allāh* (who does not resemble any entity and no entity resembles Him; Who is not like anything and nothing is like Him; Whom measures do not contain and boundaries do not confine, Whom directions do not surround; Who does not resemble bodies; Who is single without any similar; who is separate without any like) and should turn the heart to Almighty God and be engrossed in the *dhikr* of *Ism-e-dhāt*.

> Do not apply musk to the body, rub it on the heart,
> What is musk? The sacred name of Him who is full of Majesty.
> (*Rūmī*)

Before commencing the *dhikr*, the following words should be said, and their meaning, which really is the meaning of the name of God, should be borne in mind:

> Spiritual grace is overflowing from the Being, Who is single without any similar, separate without any like, Who is attributed with all qualities and perfections, is exempt from all defects and blemishes, onto my heart

concentrating on a particular *laṭīfa*.

When the *dhākir* repeats the *Ism-e-dhāt* a hundred times, he should say the following words with humility and faith, by way of loving converse with God:

> O Allah, Thou and Thy satisfaction alone are my sole objective; vouchsafe unto me Thy love and gnosis.

These words should be said from the heart. In the terminology of the Naqshbandiyya Order, this is called *Bāz-Gasht* or 'returning'. They negate the affectations of the heart. The *dhākir* becomes pure and uncontaminated and the heart is disengaged from all else save God. Khwāja Mīr Dard says that before commencing *dhikr*, the *dhākir* should with all humility and faith, keeping in view his own shortcomings, turning his face towards God and anticipating that his *dhikr* would be accepted, choose the name of God as the means of approach and fix his attention on the *dhikr* of the heart and say:

> Though the heart did not know the reality,
> Yet the steps of quest continue treading the path;
> O Lord! whether Thou dost give us Thy Grace or not,
> We would repeat Thy name, *Allāh, Allāh*!

During the dhikr, *wuqūf-i qalbī* (the alertness of the heart) should be of such a degree, and so much *dhikr* should be done, that the awareness of God, which is the very essence of human reality, may manifest itself to the heart; i.e. the *dhikr* should be repeated so often that its fruit, which is remembrance and awareness of God, and the sensing of His Presence inwardly and outwardly, may be reaped. The faculty of awareness, or the sensing of the Presence of God, is bestowed on man, and is found in every human being potentially, so it should be realized and made an actuality.

And that is how *dhikr* is performed by the Faculty of the heart. The more this *dhikr* is done, the more beneficial it will be. It is necessary to repeat it at least five thousand times in one or two sittings. This *dhikr-i-Qalbī* may be performed while lying down, sitting, walking, after ablution or without it. Physical purity, ablution, sitting, facing the *Qibla* are not necessary for it. This *dhikr* is, as it were, irregular, as against the former which is regular. In this *dhikr*, the thought is directed towards the heart, and the heart towards God. It should be repeated not less than twenty five thousand times, till the heart becomes active with the remembrance of God. This is called 'arousing the *laṭīfa-i-Qalb*'. Generally, its symptom is that as the *dhākir* meditates on the heart, he feels a movement in the region

of the heart, which is akin to the beating of the pulse. The light of the *laṭīfa-i-Qalb* is red, some can sense it, others cannot. But everybody does feel pleasure, tranquility, equanimity and a sort of effacement. The heart is overwhelmed by the love of God and cries out:

I am he whose heart is distracted in Thy love,
The gains of both the worlds have no value for me!

In his tract, the *Khulāṣat as-Sulūk*, Shāh Shaykh Rafī' ad-Dīn Qandharī Deccanī says:

> There are two kinds of heart, one is called the phenomenal heart, and the other the real heart; by the latter is meant the apperceptive faculty which takes count of the body. The heart pertains to the 'world of command' and not to the 'world of creation'. It is purely abstract, and full of light. It is not dependent on matter, so far as its essence is concerned. We sense this heart in ourselves by intuition, but it is known. Between this real heart and the Essence of God is a relation, the same kind of relation which is found in a word and its meaning; identifiable in a way and yet not quite, as a Sufi has expressed it:
>
> My heart is (as it were) a word, and Thy remembrance, the meaning of the word,
> (Now) How can the meaning be separated for the word?

Jalāladdīn Rūmī has meant the same thing when saying:

Reason here either remains silent or leads one astray,
For the heart is with Him (God) or He Himself is the heart!

In spite of abstraction, the real heart has the same relation with the phenomenal heart as a wild bird has with its nest, and the wild bird is caught only in its nest. Human nature has, in the beginning, a love for sensuous things. It is for this reason that meditation on the heart (i.e. the pine-shaped piece of flesh, which is like the nipple of the breast), and the conception of the proper name of God, which is composed of different words, is necessary in the beginning. Only after this, the sensing of the presence of God passes from the phenomenal heart to the real heart, and from name to the Reality represented by the named; as Jalāladdīn Rūmī has said:

Do you know a name without a thing answering it?
Have you ever plucked a rose from R, O, S, E?
Your name His name; go seek the reality named by it!
Look for the moon in the sky, not in the water!
If you desire to rise above mere names and letters,

Make yourself free from self at one stroke.
Become pure from all attributes of self,
That you may see your own bright existence,
Yea, see in your own heart the knowledge of the Prophet,
Without book, without tutor, without preceptor.[15]

Let it be clear that the Essence of God is, in truth, the meaning of the 'real' heart, so that this 'real' heart is really like the meaning of the phenomenal heart, and the real heart contains in itself the power and the potentialities of all the *laṭīfas* and for its *sulūk* (spiritual journey). Though the devotee lacks detailed knowledge, the starting point is the heart itself, and the end is reached there also. This is the meaning of the well-known saying of Junayd of Baghdād. In replying to a questioner, he said: 'The end is a return to the beginning.' That means that the spiritual journey or *sulūk* is begun with the phenomenal heart, doing the *dhikr* of the name of the Essence; and *sulūk* ends also in the essence of the heart, that is the real heart. It is the contemplation of the name of the Essence, i.e. of the Reality named by it, viz. *Allāh*.[16]

This is the philosophy of the *dhikr-i-Qalb* which the great Sufis of the Naqshbandiyya Order have formulated. The famous Persian poet Jāmī speaks thus of the Naqshbandiyya Order:

What dost thou know of the imprint of Naqshband?
What dost thou know of the form of the body of life?
Green grass knows the worth of rain,
Thou art dry, how canst thou know the value of rain?
Thou art still unaware of faith and unbelief,
What dost thou know of the realities of faith?

The Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-thanī has pointed out that the saintship (*wilāyat*) of the *Laṭīfa-i-Qalb* is spiritually under the feet of the Apostle Ādam. The devotee who follows in the footsteps of the Prophet Ādam attains the proximity of God through this *laṭīfa* itself, yet the dynamic and centripetal force of a spiritual preceptor is still required. The Mujaddid has explained that every devotee, depending upon his aptitude and ability, is subject to one of the Apostles, and his spiritual state is similarly subservient. It may be noted that the miraculous power of doing things in a supernatural way (*kharq-i-'adāt*), and that of performing thaumaturgic acts pertain to the prophet, and as a consequence to the saint devotee also, though they are differently named. In the case of a prophet, such acts are called *mu'jiza* or 'miracle' but in the case of the saint,

they are called *karāmat* or 'thaumaturgy', e.g. Jesus Christ brought the dead to life and was gifted with the miracle of healing the sick. Now this attribute can be found in every saint who follows in Christ's footsteps. The case of other saints following other prophets would be similar. But the saintship of the saints who follow the Prophet of Islam is most perfect.

> That is the grace of God which He bestows on whom He pleases and God is the Lord of grace abounding. (Koran VII, 21)

It is also shown that the *laṭīfa-i-Qalb* is the manifestation of one of God's beautiful names, *al-Jabbār* or the 'All-Compeller'. Its origin is that attribute of God which is termed 'creating' and 'making'. This *laṭīfa* will attain perfection when it is lost and passed into the very act of God, and exists through His act alone. In the state of *fanā-i-Qalb*, or 'the annihilation of the heart', the devotee loses his ordinary consciousness and refers all acts to God alone. In other words, he comes to find and know that creation is from God. In the terminology of the Sufis, this alone is the 'illumination of the Act of God' or the 'annihilation of the heart'. Its sign is that cognition and sensuous relation with other than God is totally severed, i.e. the heart totally forgets everything other than God, and passes into a state in which the knowledge of external things is also lost and the love of Him only remains for the love of whom man has been created:

> There should be nothing save the One in the heart,
> Even if there are a thousand in the house, it does not matter.

Shah Rafī'ad-Dīn Qandhārī says:

> When the devotee is blessed with *fanā-i-Qalb* (annihilation of the heart) he is included among the saints. This annihilation cannot be attained without crossing the 'sphere of possibility' and traversing the ten stages which have been mention by the pure Sufis.

In the following verse of the Koran a hint is contained of this very real devotion of the heart:

> The Day whereon neither wealth nor children will avail but only he (will prosper) that brings to God a sound heart. (Koran XXVI, 88, 89)

By a sound heart is meant a heart in which the affectations of the mind do not arise, and which is safe from the distractions of all that is not God. The point in referring to 'wealth and children' is that

calamities often come through undue attachment to wealth and children, as has been explained:

> Your wealth and your children are only a temptation (Koran LXIV, 15)

and again:

> Lo! among your wives and children there are enemies for you, therefore beware of them. (Koran LXIV, 14)

The Prophet has said:

> For every object there is a thing which polishes it and that which polishes the heart is remembrance of God.

This explains the point that the heart cannot be cleansed except by the naughting of all that is not God.

The Persian poet Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn 'Aṭṭār has said:

> O Lad! why dost thou adorn thy head with a turban?
> O Lad! as far as it is possible for thee, take the heart in the hand.

Another Dervish poet has said:

> The Ka'ba is the building constructed by Abraham, the friend of God,
> Take the heart in the hand, for it is the greater pilgrimage!

'Taking the heart in the hand' means the guarding of the heart from all that is not God. Whoever has secured the heart in this sense, becomes a 'man of heart' or one who has attained union, a man of 'mystic unveiling' or a saint.[17]

The Prophet's *ḥadīth* describes such a heart:

> My earth and my heaven contain Me not, but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me.

A poet has put it as follows:

> The earth and the sky cannot discover Thy vastness,
> It is my heart alone in which Thou could be contained.

The importance of the great boon attained by the devotee by cleansing of the heart may be judged by the words of an eminent disciple of the Naqshbandiyya Order:

> The gist of all the practices of the Sufis, and of devotion, or the journey to God, is that the heart may be freed from the snare of all that is not God, and gain the strength to bear tribulations and

the ills of life, and be reconciled to God's Will, and put an end to sensuous desires. When thou hast secured this wealth, understand that thou hast attained all ranks and stages. Do not desire 'mystic's unveiling' or thaumaturgic acts, because such deeds are nothing but deceptions by which is meant the amazing deeds of the magician.

The knowledge we employed in knowing the part and the whole,
When we pondered on it we found it only ignorance,
Now being helpless to hunt the savage,
We have wilfully chosen forgetfulness.[18]

In other words, when affectations of the mind are naughted by the *dhikr* or pure affirmation, or by that of affirmation and negation, and the heart is freed from all that is not God, and the feeling of presence with God continues to be strong, then it is that the journey to God is at its best. The greatest desire of the devotee is to create such a 'conscious heart'. He completely ignores rank and wealth, nor does he try to attain and seek a beloved.

Some seek dignity and wealth,
Some are in search of their beloved,
Everyone is after his own desire,
We desire a heart ever conscious of God!

After a devotee develops a 'conscious heart', he finds in himself the strength to be patient while tribulations are inflicted upon him. He is resigned to the Will of God, abstains from lust of the self, and is ready to receive the cuffs of God on his cheeks. Joy and grief, kindness and indifference, pleasure and pain, life and death are all the same to him. The words of Jalāladdīn Rūmī may be used to describe his condition:

I am enamoured of my own sorrow and pain,
It is for obtaining the good pleasure of my Lord!
I am exceedingly enamoured of His violence and His gentleness,
It is marvellous that I (am) in love with both these contrasts.

The great Shaykhs of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya Order, after making the *Laṭīfa-i-Qalb* active with the remembrance of God, remember God in the same way with *Laṭīfa-i-Rūḥ*, the place of which is on the right side of the body, below the nipple. And then, they remember God with the *Laṭīfa-i-Sirr*, the place of which is adjacent to the left nipple, more towards the centre of the chest, by a distance of two fingers; then with the *Laṭīfa-i-Khafī*, the place of which is adjacent to the right nipple, leaning a distance of two

fingers towards the chest, and facing *Laṭīfa-i-Sirr*. And they remember God with the *Laṭīfa-i-Akhfā*, whose place is the centre of the chest, until these five *laṭīfas* of the 'world of command' become active with full force. Lastly, they remember God with the *Laṭīfa-i-Nafs*, the place of which is on the forehead in the middle of the two eyebrows, until this too is made active. Then they remember God with the whole body until *dhikr* is let loose, and released from every hair of the body.[19] It is called '*sulṭān al-Adhkār*' or the *dhikr* of all *dhikrs*, or the *dhikr* par excellence. This *dhikr* becomes active after nourishing the *Laṭīfa-i-Nafs*, because the latter is the essence and the reality of the four elements: water, air, fire and earth. All the veins, tendons and bones of the devotee become *dhākir*; he feels the movement of *dhikr* in all of them, and listens to the *dhikr* with the ear of his heart. When he becomes perfect and reaches this stage, he hears the voice of all the created beings, stones, trees, walls, doors, earth, sky and every other thing down to the smallest particle. The secret of

> there is not a thing but celebrates His praise (Koran XVII, 44).

The poet Sa'dī has expressed the same idea thus:

> Everything thou seest is clamorous in His remembrance,
> But he alone knows the meaning who has ears.

But then this voice is audible to the ear of the heart alone, and not to the ear of clay:

> This thing should be heard with the ear of the heart,
> The ears of clay are of no avail here.

Dost Muḥammad Qandhārī (1928) used to say:

> Whoever performs *dhikr* of the *ism-i-Dhāt*, *i.e.* *Allāh*, twelve thousand times a day with the intent of securing the good pleasure of God thus: (five thousand with *laṭīfa-i-Qalb*, one thousand with *laṭīfa-i-Rūḥ*, one thousand with *laṭīfa-i-Sirr*, one thousand with *laṭīfa-i-Khafī*, two thousand with *laṭīfa-i-Nafs*, one thousand with the *laṭīfa-i-qalb* and goes on repeating it) he becomes *Ṣāhib al-lafẓ* or 'a man of his word'. He is the righteous, and gets whatever his heart desires. 'God fulfils the desire of the righteous.'[20]

It should also be remembered at this stage, that though the study of books is a great necessity and a blessing, yet devotion to God is not perfected without purification of the inward or the perpetual remembrance of God. The insistence of the Koran, in the verse

quoted below, is worthy of attention and should be obeyed in all circumstances:

> Call God in remembrance much that ye may prosper. (Koran VIII, 45)

This is the reason why in the beginning of devotion, especially until attaining perpetual presence with God, one should put a stop to teaching, learning and study of books, and try to establish a perpetual and abiding relation with God, undeterred and uninfluenced by any aspect of the surrounding phenomenal world, for he knows:

> How can the word which blackens paper,
> Make the blackened heart effulgent like the moon?

Those who are endowed with earnestness and patience should endeavour that in their hearts there should be nothing other known, except the 'One known', the Almighty God. According to them, it is wise that they should thus detach their heart and the faculty of perception. This detachment and isolation, by removing the rust of grief and sorrow, the love of the world and worldlings, and morbid thoughts effaces them in the Presence of God.

> To Thy Lord is the final goal. (Koran LIII, 42)

The same idea is expressed in poetry thus:

> Dost thou know what my Friend told me today?
> Seal thy eyes, do not see anybody except Me.

NOTES

1. Bukhārī and Muslim.
2. Every act of drawing the sound *Allāh* or the syllables of the *shahada*, i.e. *Lā ilāha* and *illā Allāh* from the sides, navel and brain, as described in the text, is called a *ḍarb* which literally means 'striking'. It will be noticed that the practice (i) contains only one such act, and is therefore called *dhikr-i-yak ḍarbi*, or the *dhikr* of one *ḍarb* or 'stroke'; similarly *dhikr* (ii) contains two such acts, and is, therefore, called *dhikr-i-do ḍarbi* or the *dhikr* of two *ḍarbs*. The rest of the *dhikrs*, for the same reason, are named, *seh ḍarbi* or 'three *ḍarbs*', *cahār ḍarbi* or 'four *ḍarbs*', *panch ḍarbi* or 'five *ḍarbs*' and *shash ḍarbi* or 'six *ḍarbs*'.

3. There are many ways or methods of repeating a *dhikr*. Just as there are four bodies, one within the other, so there are four levels of speech. The tongue is a physical organ and it produces sound on the grossest level. Under this tongue there is another tongue which reaches to the throat and produces sound on a subtle level. Underneath that there is a tongue which reaches to the heart . . . The fourth tongue from the heart to the navel and produces sound on the subtlest level. So all sound arises from the navel in its subtlest form.
4. In our individualistic ego-oriented society in the west, this point about 'submission' is the most difficult to grasp. (The meaning of the word 'Islam' is submission. And that is what the whole Islamic Path is all about.) Submission here has 'loving' at its basis. And if you love, then you give, you try to please, in other words 'submit'. You can't help but submit, if you love. And then it is as Jesus said: 'Thy will, O Lord . . .' It is this loving submission that the Sufis try to cultivate, and the Shaykhs try to induce in a disciple.
5. Cf. *'Pranayama'* in Yogic Hinduism.
6. Printed at Matba-i-Ahmadi, Madrasa-i-Azizi, Delhi, 1311 A.H. 20–1.
7. From *Intibāh fi Salāsil-i Auliyā Allāh*, 21–7.
8. Koran CXII.
9. *Intibāh fi Salāsil-i-Auliyā*, 27–28.
10. In the *Qaul-i Jamīl*, Shah Walīallāh has spoken of a woman who was his father's disciple, and in one breath she used to perform it a thousand times.
11. A.H. 971 to A.H. 1034/1624 AD. His tomb is in Sirhind.
12. This is the opinion of the author. It is probable that the earlier Sufis did realize these stages and states, but they did not disclose them. And probably that is meant here.
13. The plural of *laṭīfa* is *laṭāif*, but we have used *laṭifas* in the text. According to the author anything that is understood, but cannot be expressed in words. *Laṭīfa* is an organ of spiritual apprehension. It is not a physical entity, but a spiritual one. (Just as the *Kundalini shakti* in Hinduism is a spiritual force and not a physically touchable entity.)
14. Koran II, 117. The word of command is *Kun* 'Be'. The Originator of the heavens and the earth! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is.
15. R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, 69-70. The *Mathnawi* of Jalāla'ddin Rūmī has been edited and translated by R. A. Nicholson also; it is published in the 'E. J. W. Gibb Memorial' series by Luzac & Co., London, 1926–1940; repr. 1972.
16. *Khulāṣat al-Sulūk* by Shāh Rafī 'ad-Dīn Qandhārī; MS. written in 1217 A.H. under the section 'Bayān-i-Sulūk ba-ṭaur Sayyid Ādam Benūrī'.
17. ibid., chapter 'Laṭīfa-i-Qalbi'.
18. *'Ilm al-Kitāb*, Khwājā Mir Dard, Printed at Maṭba a'Ansari, Delhi, 1308 A.H. p. 37.
19. This is not impossible at all. We can see it from the practice of the Prophet Muḥammad himself.
20. *Majmū'a-i Fawāyid 'Uthmānī*, Sayyed Muḥammad Akbar 'Alī Shāh Dehlavī, printed at the Islamic Press, Delhi, 1316 A.H. p. 50.

CHAPTER V

Methods of Dhikr: The Chishtiyya Order

The Imām of the Chishtiyya Order is Khwāja Mu'īn ad-Dīn Ḥasan Sanjari Chishtī. He is sometimes known by the titles of *Nabī al-Hind* (The Prophet of India), *Gharīb Nawāz* (Benefactor of the poor), *Khwāja-i-Khwājagān* (Imām of the Imāms), *Khwāja-i-Buzurg* (the great Imām), *'Aṭā ar-Rasūl* (gift of the Prophet), and *Khwāja-i-Ajmerī* (the saint of Ajmer). He was born in 1142 A.D., or according to some authorities, in 1136 A.D. His place of birth is Sanjar, a town in Sistan, and a suburb of Khurāsān. He passed the early years of his life in Sanjar. He was the disciple and vicegerent of Khwājā 'Usmān Hārūnī, and after taking the vow of fidelity, he lived twenty years in the company of this Shaykh and served him. He is a contemporary of Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn Kubrā, Shaykh Auḥad ad-Dīn Kirmānī, Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī and Khwāja Yūsuf Hamadānī. His meeting with Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī is also proved by historical records. He died on a Friday, in the month of Rajab, 632 A.H. (1235 A.D.) His shrine is in Ajmer in India.

The Shaykhs of the Chishtiyya Order say that the Imām of the saints, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, requested the Prophet thus:

> 'O Prophet! show me the way which is the nearest of all the ways to God and which is excellent in the eyes of God also, and which is the easiest for His servants'. The Prophet said: 'Keep on repeating *dhikr* secretly.' 'Alī said: 'How shall I do it?' The Prophet said: 'Close thine eyes and hear it from me thrice.' He then repeated *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* thrice and 'Alī listened to him. Then 'Alī repeated *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* and the Prophet listened to him. Later on, 'Alī taught it to Ḥasan of Basra, and thus it has reached us'.[1]

About this tradition Shāh Walīallāh states as follows:

> This *ḥadīth* has been narrated only by the Chishtiyya Shaykhs and

> according to the traditionalists it is poor, and not authentic, for the meeting of 'Alī with Ḥasan of Basra is not a historical fact. And as the wording is not elegant enough it is difficult to accept it. But the high regard which is due to the saints of Chisht demands that we should not consider it unauthentic; for according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfa and Imām Mālik even a *ḥadīth-i-mursal*, if its narrators are reliable, is regarded as true.[2]

In the Chishtiyya Order, before the Shaykh proceeds to instruct his disciple, he makes him fast for a day, preferably a Thursday. He then asks him to say *Istighfār* and *Durūd* ten times and recites the following verse of the Koran:

> Remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining. (Koran IV, 103)

The Shaykh then tells the disciple to dwell on the command in this verse, and not to pass even a single hour without *dhikr*, as a poet has said:

> This path of quest has no stage of rest.

The Shaykhs of Chisht suggest the following method of *dhikr*:

The seeker should sit with folded knees, or sit square, and face the *Qibla*, (ablution is not a necessity, though it is better if it is done), he should sit erect, close his eyes and place both his hands on his knees. If he sits square, he should hold the *kimās* or the vein of the left leg with the toe of the right leg. This posture tends to increase warmth in the heart and dispel evil insinuations. It also dissolves the fat around the heart, which is the abode of *khannās* or 'sneaking whisperer'. Sitting in this posture, the disciple should begin *dhikr jalī* or *dhikr khafī* (loud or silent *dhikr*).

It is necessary to keep in view seven conditions and all of them are stated in the following single couplet:

> The 'intermediate state', 'Essence', 'Attributes', 'Prolongation', 'Emphasis', 'Below' and 'Above',
> Confer on the seekers ardour in every breath!

By the 'intermediate state' (*barzakh*), it is intended to refer to the similitudinary form of the Shaykh (the spiritual guide). This is necessary for the curing of the affectations of the heart. By 'Essence' (*dhāt*) is meant the *dhāt* of the Absolute Being. By 'Attributes' (*ṣifāt*) are meant the seven cardinal attributes of God, viz., life, knowledge, will, power, hearing, seeing and speech. The disciple should contemplate on all of them, and should also ponder over the essence of

God. By 'prolongation' (*madd*) is implied the prolongation of the word *Lā* (when the *dhikr Khafī* and *Ithbāt* is done), or the prolongation of the *'alif* of *Allāh* (when the Chishtiyya *dhikr seh-pāya* (three strokes) is performed). By emphasis (*shadd*) is meant that emphasis should be placed on the words *'Illā Allāh'* or on the word *Allāh*. 'Below' (*taht*) indicates that, when engaged in the *dhikr* of the proper name of God, the *hamza* of the word *Allāh* should be begun with force and uttered from under the navel, and when the *dhikr* of *Nafy wa Ithbāt* is done, that the word *Lā* should be begun with force from under the navel. By 'above' (*fauq*) is meant that the *dhikr* of the proper name of God should be completed in the brain, and in the *dhikr* of *Nafy wa Ithbāt*, it should be completed at the right shoulder.

Keeping the above in view, the *dhikr* of *Nafy wa Ithbāt* of *chahār-pāya* (four strokes) is performed thus:

Sitting in the posture of prayer, or sitting square, one should with concentration draw the word *Lā* from the navel in a prolonged manner and carry it to the right shoulder. One should then draw the word *ilāha* from the centre of the brain, and think that one has rooted out everything other than God from his heart and has thrown it behind the back. Then, taking fresh breath, one should strike at the heart with force with the words *illā Allāh*, so that the inward idols may be smashed, and at the moment of affirmation think that the Reality sought is present face to face, and that the devotee himself has disappeared.

> The Friend came in between and we walked out.

By the *Lā* of negation, the novice negates all the *ma'būdiyāt* (objects of worship) save God; the *dhākir* who occupies the middle stage negates all the *maqṣūdiyāt* (ultimate ends) save God; and the *dhākir* who has attained perfection negates the very being of all else save God. The major requirement of this *dhikr* is concentration and the apprehension of meaning, so that the *dhākir* may not incur the extreme displeasure and wrath mentioned in the *ḥadīth* below:

> I recollect him with curses who recollects me with heedlessness and when My servant recollects Me in jest My Throne trembles with wrath.

The next condition is that the disciple should keep in view the similitudinary form of his Shaykh or spiritual guide, while performing the *dhikr*. Shaykh Qāḍī Khān Yūsuf Nasīhī states:

> Four thousand spiritual guides to the path of God agree unanimously that to attain nearness to God two things are necessary: one is *dhikr* and the other is hunger. But he should not suffer hunger much who indulges in loud *dhikr*; it is sufficient to keep a fourth part of the stomach empty; he should eat more clarified butter (*ghee*), so that his brain may not get confused owing to dryness.

In the Chishtiyya Order *Dhikr-i-Ḥaddādī* is also practised as it is done in the Qādiriyya Order. This has been related from Imām Abū Ḥafṣ Ḥaddād. The method of performing it is as follows:

The *dhākir* should sit folding his legs under him, in such a way that both his hips should rest on the ground. Then he should stretch both his hands towards the sky and saying *Lā ilāha* he should stand up on the knees, and then return to the former position. Then he should place both his hands in between his folded legs, and saying *illā Allāh* strike the chest with those august words. Some draw *Lā ilāha* from the heart and take it to the right shouler, and apply the stroke of *illā Allāh* on the heart. Some say *Allāh* in the same manner and apply the stroke of *hū* on the chest.

The seeker is kept engaged for a few days in the *char-ḍarbi dhikr* (or *chahār-pāya*, or four strokes). When the light of *dhikr* manifests itself to him, i.e. when he begins to feel ardour and zeal, he is instructed in *dhikr du ḍarbī damādam* (*dhikr* of two strokes in quick succession). Its procedure is to apply one stroke of *Lā ilāha* on the right shoulder, and the second stroke of *illā Allāh* in the region of the heart and say *Muḥammadun Rasūl Allāh* on the third, fifth, seventh or ninth time. There is little diversity in this *dhikr* due to the strokes being few. When the light of this *dhikr* begins to appear, *Lā ilāha* is omitted and two stroke *dhikr* only is performed with *illā Allāh*.

In the two stroke *dhikr* of *illā Allāh*, the *dhākir* after moving his head towards the right, applies the stroke of *illā Allāh* in the region of the heart. After, the *dhikr* of the proper name of God (*Allāh*) is usual in this Order. It is performed by drawing *Allāh* from the navel upwards and applying the stroke of *hū* on the heart.

All the *dhikrs* mentioned above, whether they be loud or silent, are done by the tongue. But care is taken that the *dhikr* of *illā Allāh* is performed more than *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*.

And then the disciple is instructed in the *dhikr-i-Laq-laqa*. It is recollecting God silently and continuously without break. During this *dhikr*, the *dhākir* is at liberty to keep his mouth open or shut; he may or may not restrain his breath. This *dhikr* is performed with the tongue of the heart.

Next, the *dhākir* is instructed in *dhikr* of three strokes: *dhikr-i-seh-pāya*. There are three pillars of this *dhikr*: the proper name of God (*Allāh*), the consideration of the cardinal attributes (i.e. All-seeing, All-hearing, All-knowing etc), and the intermediary or the connecting link. The seven conditions mentioned above are to be kept in view also.

The three-stroke *dhikr* should be performed thus: the *dhākir* should sit square and draw the *hamza* of *Allāh* from under the navel with force and prolongation, restrain the breath in the chest, say *Allāh* with the heart, and say *Samī'un* (All-hearing) simultaneously with the apprehension of its meaning; and then again say *Allāh* and then *Baṣīrun* (All-seeing) with the apprehension of its meaning; and then he should say *Allāh* and then *'Alīmun* (All-knowing) understanding its meaning. This is called *'Urūj* or 'ascent'.

The *dhākir* should then, with the apprehension of its meaning, say conversely, *Allāhu 'alīmun, Allāhu baṣīrun, Allāhu samī'un*. This is called *nuzūl* or 'descent'. This double movement is called a *daur* or 'circulation, series', i.e. a *dhikr* which consists of ascent and descent. The secret of ascent and descent is that the span of hearing is more limited than that of seeing, and the span of seeing is more limited than that of knowing. The devotee in his early stage is bounded by his intellect and by what he observes, which is more narrow and limited than all the other stages. Therefore, he puts *samī'* first and when, after making progress, he reaches the unseen stage, which is more vast, he puts *baṣīr* first. When after making further progress, he reaches the stage of the 'unseen of the unseen' which is even more vast, he thinks of *'alīm*, and then he returns.[3]

According to some adepts, *Allāhu sam'īun, Allāhu baṣīrun, Allāhu 'alīmun; Allāhu 'alīmun, Allāhu baṣīrun, Allāhu sam'īun, Allāhu sam'īun, Allāhu baṣīrun, Allāhu 'alīmun* is a *dhikr* consisting of two ascents and one medium descent.

However, in this three-stroke *dhikr* the *dhākir* should restrain his breath to such an extent that gradually, from two to three times, this *dhikr* could be repeated forty or fifty times. This helps to develop heat in the heart, so that inward greasiness, which is the abode of the whisperer who creates evil affectations of the heart, may be burnt, and the *dhākir* may be overcome by the love of God and the state of self-effacement may be developed.[4]

After the devotee has successfully performed the *dhikr* of these three attributes, *samī'*, *baṣīr*, *'alīm* in the manner prescribed above, he may add five more attributes, viz., *dā'im* (Everlasting), *Qā'im* (self-

subsisting), *ḥāḍḍir* (ever present), *nāẓir* (all-seeing) and *shāhid* (all-witnessing). When he becomes steadfast in these also, he may add the other remaining seven cardinal attributes. The devotee is kept busy in this *dhikr* for as long as is necessary. When its light begins to manifest itself, i.e., he begins to feel zeal and fervour, the other compound attributes; *akram al-akramīn* (the Bountiful), *arḥam ar-arhimīn* (the most Compassionate), *ajwad al-ajwadīn* (the Giver), *dhū faḍl al-'aẓīm* (of Infinite Grace), *rabb al-'arsh al-'aẓīm* (Lord of the Supreme Throne) could be added.

Here, Shāh Kalīmallāh tells the devotee that though it is very hard to draw the *hamza* of *Allāh* with force from under the navel, yet it is highly beneficial; and that without it the *dhikr* is less effective. So the devotee should, as far as possible, perform it correctly, but he should not suffer undue strain.

The traveller on the path should also perform the four and six-stroke *dhikr* of *Allāh*. The six-stroke *dhikr* consists in striking *Allāh* on every side. The four-stroke *dhikr* consists in sitting facing the *Qibla*, and placing the Koran before him, or sitting facing the grave of a saint. He should apply the first stroke on the right side, the second on the left side, the third on the Koran and the fourth on the region of the heart. All the while he should be completely engrossed in the *dhikr*. This *dhikr* will reveal the meaning of the Koran, and if the grave is in front of him, the state of the buried person will be revealed. In this *dhikr* the use of a medium is necessary, the medium being the Shaykh or the spiritual guide. Without the medium this *dhikr* is of no use.

The members of the Chishtiyya Order perform the *dhikr Pās-i-anfas* or the '*dhikr* of the guarding of the respirations' as follows: The *dhākir* says *Lā ilāha* in the breath which is exhaled, and *illā Allāh* in the breath which is inhaled, with the tongue of the heart, i.e., the negation is done when the breath goes out, and the affirmation is done when the breath comes in. During this inhalation and exhalation, the gaze is fixed on the navel. This *dhikr* should be repeated so often that respiration itself should become the *dhākir*, whether the *dhākir* is asleep or awake.[5]

The *dhikr* of guarding the respirations could also be performed with the name of the 'Essence' (*Allāh*). The way to do it is to prolong the last letter *h* a little, so that the letter *u* may be present, i.e. the *dhākir* should, with the tongue of the heart, say *Allāh* with the ingoing breath, and *hu* with the outgoing breath.

If sound is produced from the nostrils in the *dhikr* of guarding the

respirations, whether it be done with *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* or with *Allāh*, it is called *dhikr Arra-Bīnī*. This *dhikr* causes a tumult and a burning sensation, and it makes the brain heated and dry. In such a case the Sufis rub almond oil on their heads.

The *dhākir* should try his utmost to attain perfection in this *dhikr*, and perfection is attained when respiration itself becomes the *dhākir*, without the volition and consciousness of the *dhākir*. In the beginning, this *dhikr* is performed a thousand times after the *Ishā* (night) prayer, and five hundred times after the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer. The number is gradually increased until it issues forth involuntarily.

It is related by Jābir, about the people of Paradise, that the Prophet of Islam said:

> *Tasbīḥ* (holiness to God) and *taḥmīd* (praise to God) becomes to them as usual as respiration.[6]

By thus guarding the respirations the same condition is created, and the *dhākir* becomes active with every act of respiration because when by excessive practice the habit of *dhikr* is formed with every breath, *dhikr* would become automatic and even before death, one's state would resemble the state of the people of Paradise. We are told that on the day of judgement everybody will be asked how did he spend his breaths.

If one's breath was spent in remembering God, one will attain salvation. That is the reason why Shaykh Akbar has said:

> The span of life is very short. Breaths are fine things. That which passes out does not return.

And a dervish poet has said:

> Every breath which goes is one of the age,
> The value of which is the revenue of both the worlds,
> Do not choose to destroy this treasure,
> Otherwise thou would go into the grave like a pauper, empty-handed!

When the guarding of the respirations is achieved, the devotee is counted among those 'who remember God much' as the Koran exhorts us:

> O ye believers! remember God much.

The *dhikr* of guarding the respirations is done in the heart alone and not by the outward tongue. Some Muslim jurists deny the validity of the *dhikr* of the heart (*dhikr-i-Qalb*). But *dhikr*, or 'remembrance' is

opposed to forgetfulness, hence it is a special attribute of the heart. Therefore, it is not right to limit the *dhikr* to remembrance with the tongue only. The *Dhikr* should be performed by the tongue as well as by the heart. Admitting one and denying the other is obviously incorrect.

Dhikr Kashf ar-Rūḥ (*dhikr* of the unveiling of the spirit) is performed as follows: The *dhākir* should first repeat *Yā Rabb* (O Lord!) twenty-one times. Then he should apply the *ḍarb* of *Yā Rūḥ ar-Rūḥ* (O spirit of the spirit)! Then raise the head high and say *Yā Rūḥ*. After finishing the *dhikr* he should meditate on the departed spirit sought. The spirit which has been meditated upon will make its appearance, whether the *dhākir* be asleep or awake. If this *dhikr* is performed two thousand times, the object will be gained promptly. This *dhikr* has reached Sayyid Muḥammad Gisu Darāz from Khwāja Naṣīr ad-Dīn Chirāgh Dehlavī.

Dhikr Kashf-al-Qubūr (or the *Dhikr* of unveiling of the graves):

The *dhākir* should sit near the grave, move the head towards the sky and say: *Akshif lī yā Nūr* (unveil it to me, O Light), then repeating *Akshif lī* (unveil it to me), strike at the heart, and facing the dead in the grave, apply the stroke and say '*unhalīhi*' (unveil to me his state). The state of the dead will be unveiled and disclosed either in a dream or openly when one is awake.

In the Chishtiyya Order, *Dhikr al-Ijābat al-Da'awāt* or the '*dhikr* of prayers answered' is very beneficial. It is done as follows: The *dhākir* should first apply the *ḍarb* of *Yā Rabb*! (O Lord) on the right side, then apply it again to the left side and then again on the heart. He should then say, *Yā Rabbī* (O my Lord!). This *dhikr* should be repeated many times. When the *dhākir* wants to finish this *dhikr*, he should raise both his hands and say; *Yā Rabb*, keeping the desired object in view. This *dhikr* has been related from Shaykh Muḥyi ad-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī.[7]

The following *dhikr* is effective for curing diseases: The *dhākir* should strike the left side with *Yā Aḥad* (O One!), on the right side with *Yā Ṣamad* (O besought One) and *Yā Witr* (O Single) on the heart.[8]

It is necessary to know some more facts about the *dhikr* of the restraining of the breath. Shāh Kalīmallāh Jahānābādī says:

> In some orders restraining of breath is considered the most efficacious principle for the negation of the affectations of the mind. The Shaykhs of the Chishtiyya, Kubrāwiyya, Shattāriyya and Qādiriyya Orders have made it a condition for the negation of

> the affectations of the heart and for self-effacement. But the Shaykhs of the Naqshbandiyya Order do not regard it as a condition. Yet, they do not deny its efficacy. As against them, the Shaykhs of the Suhrawardiyya Order direct that the breath should not be restrained. Consequently, Shaykh Bahā ad-Dīn 'Umar and Shaykh Zayn ad-Dīn Khwafī, stalwarts of the Suhrawardi Order, are of the same opinion.

Shah Kalīmallāh states that two things should be borne in mind. One is the restraining of the breath, the other is the stopping of the breath (*ḥabs-i-Nafs* and *ḥaṣr-i-Nafs*). Restraining of the breath is of two kinds: the emptying and the filling. By emptying (*takhlia*) is meant inhaling the breath in the belly and drawing the navel towards the back, and restraining the breath in the chest, and according to some in the brain. As a precaution some close the holes of the nose, the ears and the eyes with their fingers. But this is not necessary. It is said that Khiḍr[9] had instructed Shaykh 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduwānī to immerse himself in a cistern of water and practise thus.

The experience of the Sufis is that the restraining of breath results in many benefits, e.g. the affectations of the mind are negated and feelings of delight and even ecstasy may be experienced.

By 'filling the belly' (*tamlia*) is meant that the breath should be inhaled and held by inflating the stomach. In such cases, the navel, due to the distension of the stomach, is separated from the back. By emptying the stomach of breath, the heat which is required in *sulūk* is increased, and by filling food is digested.

The stopping of breath (*ḥaṣr-i-Nafs*), which is often practised by yogis, is cutting-off of the breath from both the sides, i.e., gradually decreasing the usual length of the inhalation and exhalation until breathing is totally stopped. There is no doubt that this act produces heat in the heart, but the heat produced by restraining the breath is greater than that produced by the stopping of breath.

It may be noted that the object of restraining of the breathing in the *dhikrs* of two and four strokes and *Ḥaddādī* and other *dhikrs* is to create heat in the heart of the devotee and this in turn creates ardour and prepares him for the love of God. It fans the flame of love and develops spiritual intoxication and tumultuous joy in the devotee.

During this period, the devotee is instructed to abstain from foods that produce excessive moisture. Similarly, he should not eat acidic or spicy foods. When breath is exhaled after it has been restrained, it should be exhaled slowly from the nose and not through the mouth; otherwise it may prove harmful. Again, this should not be done when

the stomach is full, or when one is hungry. The restraining of breath with all these precautions is necessary in the beginning of *sulūk*, but when the devotee attains perfection, he may or may not practise it. Shāh Kalīmallāh admits that the Sufis have learnt this practice from Hindu ascetics.[10]

The eminent Sufis hold that when the human self is purged of all attachment to sensual objects, and the inward being is strengthened by the remembrance of God, a relation is established and a link is forged between it and the spiritual domain. Due to this relation, the heart of the devotee is enlightened, and he beholds the Essence of God and comes to know of God's commands and pleasure. Now this light is reflected from the inward sight onto the outward eye and he begins to observe with outward senses the inward spiritual worlds, and at this stage he is detached from both the outward and the inward worlds.[11]

Dhikr also enables the devotee to see different kinds of lights. The colour of these lights is sometimes white, sometimes green and at other times red; in the end the colour black appears, which is called the 'Light of bewilderment' and the 'Light of the Essence'. The light which is seen adjacent to the right shoulder is regarded as the light of the recording angel of the right side. If it is discontinuous, it is considered to be the light of the Shaykh, and if it appears before the *dhākir*, it is regarded as the light of the Prophet Muḥammad. Similarly, if it appears adjacent to the left shoulder, it is the light of the recording angel of the left side; and if it is discontinuous, it is considered to be a deception of the Diabolus. In the same way, if any form appears on the left side, it is also regarded as the deception of the satan. If the light appears from behind and above the head, it is considered to be the light of the guardian angels. If the light appears without any direction, and the *dhākir* is frightened by it, and the presence of God is not felt after it disappears, it should also be regarded as the guile of Diabolus. If presence of God is sensed while the light appears and the separation from and the longing for God are felt after it disappears, one should understand that it is the light of the Reality sought. If the light appears on the chest, and above the navel, it is again considered to be the deception of the satan. If the light appears on the heart, it is regarded as the light produced by the purification of the heart.

But the true seeker should not pay any attention to these lights, neither should he be pleased with them, for they are not the desired object. The devotion of the seeker to whom no light is manifested is

regarded as the safest, and he can entertain hope of further attainment.

Shāh Kalīmallāh has, in his *Kashkūl*, spoken also of some more *dhikrs* which have been handed down from heart to heart, and the Shaykhs teach them to such disciples only as have been cleansed by their own striving, self-abnegation and penance of forty days (*chillas*).

1. One such special *dhikr* is the *dhikr-e-mā'iyat*, which is performed with *Yā ma'iy, yā ma'iy, yā hū* (O Thou, Who art with me). The method of performing it is as follows: The *dhākir* should sit with folded knees, with hips on the ground, and grasp firmly the left shoulder with the right hand, and the right shoulder with the left hand. He should then repeat the six words in such a way that a stroke may be applied with each word. The first stroke should be between the right foot and the right knee, the second towards the sky, the third between the left foot and the left knee, the fourth on the liver, and the fifth with full energy in the region of the heart. Uttered with such presence of mind, *hū* signifies 'abstract Oneness' (*aḥadiyyat maṭlaqah*).

> There is nothing whatever like unto Him. (Koran XLII, 11)

It is better if during this *dhikr* the diet of the *dhākir* is milk, and it would be advisable if saffron is also added. He should also apply perfumes. It is likely that the *dhikr* may be limited to three words only viz., *Hū, Hū, Yā ma'iy*, and the *dhākir* should strike *Hū, Hū* at the sky, and *ma'iy* at the heart.

2. The next *dhikr* is called *dhikr-i-Kulliyat* (the *dhikr* of totality), and it is performed as follows:

The words used are: *Bika'l-kull, minka'l-kull, ilaika'l-kull, yā kull al-kūl!* (With Thee is all, from Thee is all, upto Thee is all, O, All in All). The *dhākir* should sit square. He should strike once before him, once on the right side, and once at the sky or the heart. By both these *dhikrs*, the vision of the Essence and its attributes is attained.

3. The third special *dhikr* is *dhikr-i Ihāṭa* (*dhikr* of encompassment) and it is: *Yā Muḥīṭ Ẓāhiran wa Bāṭinan* (O Ye, who encompasseth all, outwardly and inwardly). This *dhikr* leads to vision. The method of performing it is that the *dhākir* should keep his eyes open while saying *ẓāhirun* and closed while saying *bāṭinun*.

4. The fourth *dhikr* is *Maḥw-al-jehāt*. The words used are: *Anta fauqī, anta taḥtī, anta amānī, anta khalfī, anta yamīnī, anta shimālī, anta fīyya wa anā ma' al-jehāt fīka ainamā tawwullu*

fathamma wajhu Allāh, (Thou art above me, Thou art below me, Thou art before me, Thou art behind me, Thou art on my right side, Thou art on my left side, Thou art in me, and I with all directions in Thee. Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of God.)

The following is the method of performing it: The *dhākir* should stand up, turn his face towards the sky, and say, *anta fauqī,* then turn towards the earth and say, *anta taḥtī.* Standing up, he should look in front of him and say, *anta amāmī.* He should then move to the right side, turn backwards and say *anta khalfī.* Then turning his face towards the right, he should say, *anta shimālī,* and striking on the heart he should say, *anta fīyya.* Finally, turning to the left he should revolve on all the four sides and say, *anā ma' al-jehāt fīka, ainamā tawallū fathamma wajhu Allāh.* Some people go to the mountain or forest and perform this *dhikr* there, so no one may observe them.[13]

5. Out of these *dhikrs,* one is styled *dhikr-i-tajallī-i-anāniyat* (the illumination of the self) and it is the *dhikr* of *Innī anā'l lāha, la ilāha illā anā* (verily, I am the essence, there is nothing worthy of worship but Me).[14] This *dhikr* is performed a hundred times after the midnight prayer. The method is as follows: The *dhākir* should turn his head towards the sky and say, *Innī anā'l lāha,* then turning his head towards the right he should say, *lā ilāha,* and finally he should strike *illā anā* with full force in the region of the heart.

In all of the above *dhikrs,* the sensing of the spiritual guide and the apprehension of the meaning of the words of the *dhikr* is a necessary condition, provided that the Shaykh or the spiritual guide is a 'realized' Sufi; otherwise the understanding of the meaning is sufficient.

It should be noted that the *dhikrs* are rooted in, and are dependent on love. The more the *dhākir* loves God, the more will the *dhikr* be effective. But it happens also that by the constant practice of *dhikr,* the ties of love are strengthened and the flame of love is fanned in the heart. The *dhikr* kindles the extinguished embers of love, and the devotee cannot advance a step without love. The idea is beautifully expressed in the following verse:

> Beware, thou shouldst not regard the state of the man of heart as play,
> By not doing the work thyself, do not think of accomplishing the task.
> Unless thou art not totally consumed by the fire of love,
> Do not seek divine unity by mere talk.

When the *dhikr* is finished, the *dhākir* should say thrice:

> Glory to God and to Him alone all praise; Glory to God, the Great, and to Him all praise

and then recite the following prayer:

> O Allah! verily Thou said: 'Remember Me and I shall remember ye'. I have remembered Thee according to my reason and understanding—remember me according to Thy knowledge, Grace, Forgiveness and Munificence! O Allah! open the ears of our hearts by Thy remembrance! O Thou, who is better than all who remember!

Shaykh Kalīmallāh has been a Shaykh of a high rank in the Chishtiyya Order. He is the vicegerent and the disciple of Shaykh Yaḥyā Madanī Chishtī. He was born in 1060 A.H. 1640 A.D. The date of his birth is extracted from the word '*ghanī*'. He passed away in 1142 A.H. 1720 A.D. One of his disciples has extracted the date of his death from the words *dhāt-i-pāk*.

In his incomparable work, *Kashkūl*, towards the end, he has presented a special method of *dhikr* which, according to him, is suitable for the disciple who can exercise the 'right of individual interpretation'. The aim of this *dhikr* is the attainment of 'all-pervading knowledge' (*'ilm-i-basīṭ*) and the passing away of the self in the presence of the Essence of God (*fanā-fi-Allāh*). We present here, in simple language, the gist of what Shaykh Kalīmallāh has said. It is a priceless boon for the wise and knowing seeker. He says:

> It is strongly hoped that if one acts according to this method, one will come out of the pit of 'separation' (*firāq*) and in a short time will reach the summit of 'union' (*jam'*)

(1) The seeker should sit with perfect purification, in a secluded place. He should close his eyes, touch his palate with his tongue, and think that the physical heart is murmuring *Allāh, Allāh*, that he is not listening to it, but that he will try to listen to it. Then he should fully concentrate on listening to it. By the help of God he will feel a slight motion in the heart. Now he will not know whether this motion is in the heart, or in the breath or merely in his imagination. Hence he should concentrate more, so that this motion may become more audible and the doubt that it may be the motion of respiration or mere imagination is dispelled, and he may be certain that it is the heart that is palpitating and murmuring *Allāh, Allāh*. In the terminology of the Naqshbandiyya Order, this is regarded as the

Laṭīfa-i-Qalb becoming active with the remembrance of God. This great boon is acquired according to the aptitude and practice of the devotee, some acquire it early, others after a long time. Some acquire it with a little attention, others after trying hard. But none are disappointed.

(2) When the *dhākir* has attained this stage, it is incumbent on him to persevere and listen to this motion, while in company or alone. He should keep silent often, try to preserve and keep it going; for in the beginning this motion is very feeble, and the slightest impediment may stop it. When this great boon is attained, one should never regard it as trivial, and try day and night to nourish it, and develop it. For a while, supererogatory prayers and litanies could be given up, and only the necessary, obligatory and prescribed prayers may be performed. At times, he should open his eyes and enjoy this mystic state, till he develops the faculty that, even when his eyes are open, he may be attentive to the heart's murmur. This state is called *Khilwat dar anjuman* (or the ability to enjoy solitude even while in assembly). With the grace of God this state grows stronger. In moments of forgetfulness it should be aroused again with a little attention. After this it will last for a longer time, and no impediment can stop it. In this state the seeker derives pleasure in *dhikr*, and he acquires peace and equanimity of heart.

(3) When the motion of the heart reaches the stage that the *dhākir* may begin to hear the blessed name of *Allāh* freely from the tongue of the heart, and knows that the motion arises from the pine-shaped heart, then this motion can be dispersed and diffused to all the parts of the body. Thus it happens that this motion manifests itself first in an organ of the devotee's body: sometimes in the hand, sometimes in the head and sometimes in the foot, though the devotee does not intend to move that organ and concentrates on the heart alone. When the light of the *dhikr* begins to diffuse thus, it surrounds the whole body in a short time, and the body of the devotee from the head down to the toe is filled with *dhikr*. At this stage various mystic states are experienced. Sometimes he feels happy, sometimes dejected and bewildered, but the devotee should try not to pay attention to these states, but should keep himself engrossed in the *dhikr*, which is his most important task. With divine grace, it so happens that the *dhikr* of *Allāh* issues forth from the whole body, and all the organs of the body concur with the heart. In such a state, the dominance of *dhikr* may be greater on one organ and less on another. Sometimes it permeates all the organs, and if it is evenly

distributed in all the organs, then the *dhākir* feels great pleasure. In the terminology of the Sufis, this is called *sulṭān al-dhikr*.

(4) At this stage, Shaykh Kalīmallāh reminds us of the principle of the great Sufis that the object of *dhikr* is the effacement of the self in the Reality remembered, and not effacement in the name of the Reality remembered. Therefore, the devotee should not concentrate his attention on the mere pronouncing of the word *Allāh*, whether this word be uttered by the tongue or by the heart. Though doing this is certainly beneficial and one is rewarded for it, yet without feeling the presence of the remembered Reality, this *dhikr* does not lead to the Reality sought, and as we have just said ,the real goal of the *dhikr* is *fanā-fi-Allāh*, or the passing away of the self in the Reality, and not get stuck on its Name.

(5) When the devotee reaches the stage of the *sulṭān al-dhikr*, it happens sometimes that he feels a movement in the arteries and the pine-shaped heart that is different in its nature from the first movement. For example, the movement which was produced by *dhikr* was not continuous, while this new motion is continuous. In other words, the first motion resembled that of *hū hū hū* in which there were pauses, while the second motion resembles a prolonged *hū*; in other words, the first motion was intermittent, while the second is continuous. Also the second motion is subtler than the first, and is perceived after considerable practice.

We should also note that the first motion, which is not continuous, could be identified with the words *hū*, *Allāh* or *Ḥaqq*, for every word has a sound which has a beginning and an end. Therefore, every discontinuous sound which has a beginning and an end can be identified with a discontinuous word. But the second motion, which is continuous, and whose beginning and end are not clear, could not be identified with separate or discontinuous words. Therefore we can identify it with the Reality remembered, and not with the *dhikr*, i.e., the name of the Reality remembered.

In this connection a doubt arises. The Reality that is remembered and sought, i.e., *Ḥaqq* or 'God' is invested with such absoluteness, that in respect of Him absoluteness can be regarded as limitedness, or in technical language, its position is that of *lā bi sharṭ-i-shay* (without condition of anything), and not *bi sharṭ-i lā shay* (with condition of nothing). But whatever the devotee senses by the second movement entirely belongs to the sensous world, and pertains to the stage of *bi-sharṭ-i lā shay*. How could this then be identified with the Reality remembered, or the one sought, i.e., the Almighty God?

We concede that this doubt is correct as far as it goes. But we should note that an object which has some 'absoluteness' is nearer to the Reality sought than the object which has 'limitation' as its attribute. As the second type of motion, when compared to the first, has absoluteness in it, it resembles the Reality sought more than the first type. In reality, these two types belong to the world of 'Descents', and manifestations of Names and Attributes. In the journey to God, the real end is *lā bi sharṭ-i-shay*, which is the highest stage in the journey to God and its attainment is possible only when the devotee reaches the stage of *fanā* or the 'total passing away' and then *baqā* or the 'abiding in God'.

(6) However, when this continuous motion is perceived by the devotee, some feel its diffusion in the entire body, and some in one particular organ. Anyway, this perception draws attention to the Reality sought. However, if it does not do so, and attention is not drawn to the Reality sought, then concentration should be directed towards the physical heart without considering or mentioning the name *Allāh*. Even if after this, attention is not drawn to the Reality sought, then attention should be fixed on it by taking the name *Allāh*. But it may be noted that attention to the name alone without considering the Reality named (*Allāh*), is harmful, as it defeats the real purpose.

Now, the devotee should apply the knowledge of this continuous motion to the continuous motion itself, for distance and nearness, presence and absence, annihilation and the total passing away are the necessary consequences of this very knowledge. Since the real source of both the continuous and the discontinuous motion is the heart alone, therefore the devotee should acquire the knowledge of these motions from the heart alone, and not from any other organ. When the whole body of the devotee is blessed with this motion, he should apply the Reality remembered on the entire motion of the body and apply this knowledge on the Reality remembered. In this state, effacement and ecstasy is experienced in abundance and the devotee attains the state of 'passing away' or total annihilation.

(7) When after intense and prolonged practice, the devotee reaches this stage, in which most of the time the knowledge of this motion is present, he should then try that the consciousness of this knowledge is acquired without the medium of the physical heart, and there may be no need of directing attention to it. Thus further progress may be made, and the attention may be elevated from the piece of flesh and the entire body. This is called the *'ilm al-baṣīr* or

the 'all pervading knowledge'. Courage should be taken in both the hands for nourishing this 'state', and changing it from short spells to longer periods and finally to perpetuity.

(8) If sometimes, due to weakness of the relation with the Reality sought, presence could not be maintained without the medium of motion, then by the means of this very motion, attention should be directed towards the relation, but *ghaflah* (forgetfulness of God) should not be allowed or tolerated. If the total continuous motion of the body is also stopped, attention should be directed towards the particular continuous motion of the heart. If this too is lost, the devotee should take a cold bath, or exhale the breath from the brain with force, or he should repeat the name of God *Fa'āl* a few times with the presence of mind, apprehending its meaning. God willing, he will regain the relation with the Reality that he has lost by one of the above methods.

(9) If by the grace of God and due to his patience and practice, the devotee reaches the stage in which most of the time he senses the presence of the remembered God, without directing his attention towards the total motion of the body, he should then try that not even for a moment he is forgetful of this great boon, whether it be in the acts of the limbs or in the actions of his heart. In such a case it will be said about him that he has attained the rank of those whose hand is busy in work and whose heart is busy in the remembrance of the Beloved (God).

O brother, think of a plan to acquire (spiritual) wealth,
Do not spend this precious life in forgetfulness.
Always, everywhere, and in every work,
Keep the eye of the mind rivetted on the Beloved!

(10) The devotee should try his best to assure that his knowledge is kept free from all directions, or from the admixture of any quality, so that, because of the absoluteness and the absence of limitedness, complete resemblance may be produced between the knowledge and the Known. This point may be stated more explicitly thus: the devotee, from the centre of his heart discovers a relationship or *nisbat*, which is like a string and is directed towards the Reality sought, that it may be connected with it. But, as the other party which is the Reality sought, is in itself absolute and undetermined, this relationship will necessarily be connected with the same Absolute and Undetermined Essence which is free from all notions of quality and quantity.[15]

This state is interpreted as the state of being irresistibly drawn towards God, as a consequence of which fervour, ecstasy, joy, intoxication, fear and reverence are developed; saintship means the experiencing of such a state.

NOTES

1. 'Alī died in 661 A.D. and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in 728 A.D. The meeting of 'Alī with Ḥasan al-Basrī is not a historical fact.
2. *Shifā al-'Alīl*. The translation into Urdu of Shāh Walī Allah's work, *Qaul al-Jamī*, Nizami Press, Kawnpur, 1291 A.H. 44–45.
3. *Kashkūl-i-Kalīmī*, Shah Kalīmallāh Shāhjahānī, Mujtabai Press, Delhi, 1308 A.H.
4. ibid., 20.
5. ibid., 21. Vid. also, chapter III note 11 above.
6. Muslim.
7. Shah Kalīmallāh Shāhjahānī, op. cit. 23.
8. ibid., 24.
9. Vid. above chapter II, note 41.
10. Shāh Kalīmallāh Shāhjahānī, op.cit. 19.
11. ibid., 19.
12. Cf. Al-Ghazzālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (*The Niche for Lights*), English translation by W.H.T. Gairdner, Lahore 1952.
13. Shāh Kalīmallāh Shāhjahānī, op. cit. 24, 25.
14. Cf. the *japa* of *So-ham* (I am That), *Shivo-ham* (I am Shiva) in Hinduism.
15. The explanation of Shāh Kalīmallāh ends here. Vid. *Kashkūl*, 33–43.

CHAPTER VI

Emptying of the Sirr: Takhliya-i-Sirr

Make me so engrossed in Thy thought that due to self-effacement,
I will take no notice of who enters or leaves the field of my consciousness.

After cleansing the heart, or rather while it is still in the process, the emptying of the *sirr* is a necessary step in *sulūk*, the spiritual journey towards the *Ḥaqq* or Reality or Truth. It means the emptying of one's self of all thoughts that divert the mind from God—thoughts of anything save God. The *sirr* should be so guarded that the thought of other than God may not find its way into it, and if perchance it does so, it should be immediately negated. As a Sufi poet has advised us:

Guard the faculty of *sirr* always and in all states,
So that no sneaking thought should come into it,
Consider every thought of other than God a thief,
This effort is a duty cast on all votaries of God.

For emptying the *sirr*, 'contemplation' (*murāqaba*) is necessary. The word *murāqaba* is derived from *raqīb*, which means a guard, or a sentinel. The *Sirr* should be so guarded that no thought other than that of God may enter into it; and it should be wholly occupied with the contemplation of God alone. How this contemplation is done is explained later on.

According to the eminent Sufis, *sirr* is an organ of mystical vision, just as the heart (*qalb*) has the faculty of divine knowledge or gnosis, and the spirit (*rūḥ*) is the place of divine love. They consider the *laṭīfa-i-Sirr* more subtle than the spirit and maintain that *asrār* (plural of *sirr*) are entrusted to those who are emancipated from the bondage of other than God. The word *sirr* applies to everything which passes between the finite and the infinite, the *'abd* and the *rabb* (servant and master, or the contingent being and his Creator). That is why it has been said that the bosoms of the emancipated souls are the tombs of *asrār*, (the secret communications that pass between :hem and their Creator and nobody knows about them). If we un-

derstand *sirr* as the faculty or organ that receives divine communication and the ensuing secret state, it would be evident that *sirr* is not a thing or a substance but a concept. In this sense, it is said that there exists between the *'abd* and the *rabb* a *sirr* and a *sirr as-sirr* or a 'secret of the secret', or what is otherwise known as *akhfā*. The Koran says:

> If you pronounce the word aloud (it is no matter), for verily He knoweth what is secret (*sirr*) and what is a still deeper secret (*akhfā*): (Koran, XV, 7).

Thus, *sirr* means the secret between the *'abd* and the *rabb*; and by *sirr as-sirr* is meant that secret which is not known even to the *'abd* but is known to God alone Who knows all the secret and hidden things.

The Sufis, who have maintained that *sirr* is a specific thing or substance, believe that *sirr* is a higher faculty than the heart and the spirit, but some hold that it is superior to the heart but inferior to the spirit.

The Shaykh al-Islam, Shaykh Shihāb ad-Din Suhrawardi is of the opinion that *sirr* is not something different from the 'heart' or the 'spirit'. It has no separate or individual existence of its own. According to him, those who regard *sirr* as of a higher rank than the spirit do so because they have found that the spirit when released from the bondage of the *Nafs*, or the 'imperious self' and the passions of the heart, acquires a new attribute which it did not possess before, and thus, they thought that it was altogether a separate entity, quite different from the spirit. They failed to note that it was the same entity, spirit, which having acquired a new attribute looked like a separate entity. Similarly, those who regard *sirr* as inferior to the spirit and superior to the heart did not understand that when the heart attains perfection and is fully emancipated from the slavery of the *nafs*, and is free from the dominance of passions and the satanic affectations of the heart, it acquires a marvellous quality, and that is why they thought that it is a separate *laṭīfa* or 'faculty', distinct from the heart and the spirit and that its place was above the heart and below the spirit.

Some Sufis think that the *sirr* signifies a subtle conception which is hidden in the depths of the spirit. It can neither be grasped by reason nor expressed in language. As the tongue is the interpreter of the heart, so also reason is the interpreter of the spirit. The import of the things of the unseen, which are revealed to the spirit, and which the

spirit would like to disclose to the heart, are interpreted through the medium of reason. However, there are many subtle points intuited directly by the spirit which it cannot state to the heart through reason. In the same way, the heart also has its own intuitions which it cannot express in language. Now the import of the things which are intuited by the spirit, but which cannot be interpreted by reason, and the heart is not aware of them are called *asrār-i-rūḥ* or the 'secrets of the spirit'. And the import or the meaning, which remain hidden in the heart and words fail to translate them, are called *asrār-i-qalb* or 'secrets of the heart'. That is why the votaries of reason, e.g. the philosophers of the rationalist school remain oblivious to the intuition grasped by the spirits of the Prophets and refuse to believe its existence. In truth, the intuition of the spirit cannot be comprehended by reason or intellect. No doubt reason occupies the highest rank in the order of creation. Spirit ranks higher than reason, but then spirit belongs to the *'ālam-i-amr* or the 'world of command', and not to the *'ālam-i-khalq* or the 'world of creation'. Reason subsists through the spirit, spirit does not subsist through reason. Reason compared to spirit is like the rays of the sun as compared to the sun itself. The rays of the sun, though of great value and use are derived from and depend upon the sun for their existence. As the forms of sensuous things are revealed by the rays of the sun, so also the forms of various things known or conceived are revealed to the heart by the light of reason.[1]

One adept has clearly distinguished between the functions of these *laṭīfas* or 'faculties'. He says,

> the function of the *nafs* is to serve, the function of the heart is to love, the function of the spirit is to seek the proximity of God and the function of the *sirr* is to lose itself in the vision of God, the Real.

Whether we regard *sirr* as an independent faculty, or consider it as a developed form of the spirit, or of the heart, the emptying of the *sirr* is an important step in *sulūk*. We will now describe some of the methods employed by the Sufis for the emptying of the *sirr*.

As stated above, the emptying of the *sirr* is achieved by *murāqaba* or 'contemplation'. It is an act of the mind. We explained above that the word *Murāqaba* is derived from the word *raqīb* which means watchman, a guard and a person who awaits. This is the sense in which it is used in the Koran:

> So wait and watch, for they too are waiting. (Koran, XLIV, 59)

and it is also said:

> God ever watches over you. (Koran, IV, 1)

In the technical sense, *murāqaba* means reasoning, reflection and idealization. Shāh Walīallāh, in marginal notes on his very valuable book, *Qaul al-Jamīl* says:

> The very essence of *murāqaba* is to concentrate the faculty of perception on a certain point, e.g. any of the attributes of God, or on the condition obtaining after the departure of the soul from the body, or on any other mental state or condition. This concentration should be with all the power of mind, thought and imagination, so that that which is not perceived or felt may be intuited and known clearly.

A thing perceived or felt is one which is sensed by the five senses. Similarly, a thing which is not perceived is one which is out of reach of the five senses. For example, death is not perceived until it happens. But if we close our eyes and imagine that our soul has left our body, our eyes and our mouth have remained open, then, though we do not sense death, yet, we in a way may know what death is. This is perhaps what Shāh Ṣāhib means when he says

> that which is not sensed or felt may be intuited clearly.

If we understand this point which is strongly emphasised by Shāh Walīallāh, the practice of contemplation of any description becomes easy.

To explain the nature of contemplation fully, Imām Qushayrī has cited, in his *Risāla*, the case of a negro boy whom Ḥaḍrat 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar once met on a journey, tending a flock of sheep at the foot of a hillock. 'Umar asked the boy if he would like to sell one of the lambs in the flock. 'No' was the prompt and curt reply. 'But why?' asked 'Umar. 'Why?—because it is not mine', replied the boy. 'It is my master's and I am his slave'. 'What matters?' said 'Umar, 'take this money, give that lamb to me and go tell your master that a wolf has snatched away the lamb'. The boy stared hard at 'Umar and said, *'fa ayn Allāh?'* (where, then is God?). His meaning was clear. He could cheat his master who was on the other side of the hillock, but he could not cheat the Great Master who was watching and listening to both of them. Ibn 'Umar appreciated the boy's reply and used to repeat this story often to his companions, recalling the boy's words *'fa ayn Allāh'* which clearly showed that he felt the presence of

God with him. This is the very essence of *murāqaba*, viz., that God is ever watching over us.

Murāqaba is the consciousness of God who is watching over us while we are engaged in our daily routine, God is seeing our outward and inward acts and thoughts, that God *knows what the soul of man whispereth to him*, and that *He is closer to him than his jugular vein*. The Prophet of Islam has, therefore, advised us to worship God as though we are seeing Him.[2]

Shāh Walīallāh regards this *Ḥadīth* as the very same from which the act of *murāqaba* or contemplation is derived.[3] Hence, *murāqaba* is defined thus:

> *Murāqaba* is to fix firmly in the mind that God ever watches over you.

Murāqaba operates at two levels: external and internal.[4] External contemplation means:

> The turning away of the five external senses from the world and all its creatures, and disengaging from them both in society, and from vain-glorious and meaningless thoughts when alone.[5]

This is explained by the renowned author Al-Hujwīrī in the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* thus:

> He who eschews lust necessarily sees God by his inward eyes.

And the poet Sa'dī expresses his experience thus:

> Sa'dī closed his eyes entirely on the world,
> So that he may realize that the entire universe is the idea of the Beloved.[6]

By blocking the external senses the internal senses are awakened. That is to say, if you stop the five external senses from functioning, the internal senses start functioning more efficiently. That is why internal contemplation is regarded as the fruit of external contemplation. And 'internal contemplation' is nothing but the 'guarding of the heart' (*murā'āt al-qalb*).

> It is the preventing the heart from thinking of anything whatsoever, keeping it free from all vain thoughts, while sitting or reclining in public or in private, and disengaging it from cogitating on the past or the future. While engaged in contemplation if the thought of even prayer or worship comes, it should be negated at once, because this will bring contemplation from a higher to a lower level.[7]

It is also possible that to all outward appearances a man may seem engaged in mundane matters, and yet his heart may be free from all these matters and be wholly absorbed in God. Such a devotee is called *mashgūl fārigh*, i.e. 'one who is engaged and yet is free', as against the devotee who though he appears to be engaged in contemplation, yet his mind is perturbed by unholy and satanic suggestions. The Sufis call such a one *fārigh mashgūl*, 'free and yet engaged'. This is how Sa'di describes the mental condition of a devotee who is 'engaged and yet free':

> My heart is with Thee but my eyes are elsewhere,
> So that nobody need suspect that I am looking at Thee.
> Thank God, my heart has the pang of Thy love,
> And is free from manifold griefs and sorrows.

When the heart feels the pangs of the love of God, it is freed from other manifold griefs and sorrows of the world and it is wholly engrossed in the thoughts of the Real Beloved, and finds peace and pleasure in it. One lover of God has depicted this state of tranquillity as follows:

> My thought surveyed the entire universe and returned,
> As it did not like any place better than Thy presence.

In contemplation, concentration is essential; without it contemplation is not possible. *Mushāhada* 'vision' is not possible without contemplation, and concentration is necessary for both of them. Some adepts have made a distinction between vision and contemplation, but others hold that both are the same. Those who have made a distinction think that in contemplation you are aware that God watches over you, but in the vision it is you who sees God.

Now we shall describe some of the different forms of contemplation practised in the various Sufi Orders.

CONTEMPLATION ACCORDING TO THE QĀDIRIYYA ORDER

1. *Contemplation of the Omnipresence of God (Hudūr-i-Ḥaqq)*: The seeker silently utters the following words or just meditates over their meaning:

> God is present with me, God is watching me, God is with me (*Allāhu Ḥāḍirī, Allāhu Nāẓirī, Allāhu Ma'ī*),

and then contemplates the presence of God with him (though God transcends all space and direction). This should be so total that he loses awareness of everything other than God, including his own self, so that it can be said of him:

> Having lost self-consciousness, thou findest it difficult to come back,
> Obviously, thou hast got the scent of eternal friendship.

This contemplation is also styled the 'contemplation of purity' or *murāqaba-i-ṣafā*.

2. *God is with me*: The contemplative meditates on this verse:

He is with ye wheresoever ye be.

Now he holds fast to the belief that God is with him while standing, sitting, or reclining, when among people or alone, so much so that the thought of God being present with him gets firmly rooted in his mind, and he may not have to say dejectedly and with a sense of failure:

> 'Look at Me, and I am with you!' saith the Lord; and yet (I am) going round the world in search of Him.

or

> What shall I do, to whom can I say that,
> He is so close to me and yet I am bereft of Him.

3. *The contemplation of:*

Whithersoever ye turn, there is the countenance of Allāh (Koran, II, 115):

As God encompasseth all things, He is present in everything. Wheresoever you turn your face, or whatever thing you may find, the Divine Essence, too, is present in it, for nothing can exist without the omnipresence or companionship of God Almighty. By this contemplation, the Beauty of the Beloved is seen everywhere, and in order to arouse the ardour latent in every heart an ecstatic has said:

> Strive today to develop thy vision to see,
> And be astonished at the Beauty of thy Beloved;
> Be not like children who on the eve of the Festival day
> Await the advent of the morrow.

How truly has it been said:

> What do I do with the eye that does not see the Beloved!
> Of what use is the eye that looks at others!

4. *The contemplation of:*

> knoweth he not that God doth see (Koran, XCVI, 14):

By the contemplation of this verse of the Koran we are enabled to feel perpetually the intimate presence of God within, and we sense the presence of God without. So that we may say involuntarily:

> The entire universe reflects the Beauty of my Beloved,
> Wherever the heart opens its eyes, it catches His glimpse!

5. *The contemplation of the Koranic verse:*

> We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Koran L, 16)

If we dwell on this contemplation, and its implications we will realise that it is only the veil of unawareness or ignorance that separates us from God. As a Sufi poet has said:

> The slumber of ignorance has flung thee off the presence of God,
> Otherwise none is so close to thee as thy Friend!

6. *The contemplation of:*

> Allah ever surroundeth all things. (Koran IV 126)

The same idea is expressed in yet another verse of the Koran:

> It is He that doth encompass all things. (Koran XLI 57)

The contemplative finds the Pure Essence of God all around himself and feels that he is submerged in it, as a drop of water is in the ocean. The Sufis of the Order of the *Unity of Being* call this contemplation the 'contemplation of the encompassment of Being' (*murāqaba-i-Iḥāṭat-i-Wujūd*), and being engulfed in the ocean of Being they cry out:

> Where is the other than God? Who is the other?
> Is there any trace of it?
> By God, except God there is none that exists.

7. *The contemplation of:*

> He is the First and the Last; He is the Outward and the Inward and He is the knower of all things (Koran LVXV 3):

He refers to *Dhāt* or the 'Essence' of God, and all these four terms are definitive in character and purpose, because the Arabic article *alif-lām* is always used to signify definitiveness in concept and intent. By

this definition, in all the four aspects of existence, viz., the first, the last, the outward, and the inward, God's Being alone is affirmed, and the existence of any being other than God is negated. There is no fifth aspect where it could be affirmed.

> Thou alone art the First and the Last, where then is the question of temporality and eternity?
> Thou alone art the Outward and the Inward, why then talk of Being and Not-Being?
> The First that never changeth place, the Last which never passeth away,
> The Outward and the Inward both without quality and quantity.

A comment on the above verse is to be found in the prayer of the Prophet Muḥammad which has been cited by Abū Dāwūd, Muslim and Tirmidhī and Ibn Māja from Abū Hurayra:

> You are the First and there is nothing before You;
> And You are the Last and there is nothing after You;
> You are the Outward and there is nothing above You;
> You are the Inward and there is nothing below You!

Contemplation of this verse dissolves the individual 'being' of the devotee, in the same way as salt dissolves in water, and then when the separate existence of the salt is sought it is not to be found. It is in this sense that Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī has said:

> I search for myself and I do not find myself, instead I find God!

While engaged in contemplation, the seeker, due to spiritual intoxication, may not be conscious of his own limitation, or 'determination', but the 'determination' is not removed. The *'abd* does not become the Absolute, the contingent being does not become the Eternal One. What is called *fanā'* or 'passing away' signifies the state where consciousness of one's own determination does not remain, but when one descends lower, the consciousness of one's own determination returns. It is agreed by all the Sufis or Gnostics that the quality of being necessary (i.e. Necessity) and Absoluteness are the attributes of God alone, and the *'abd* does not possess these attributes. The attributes of the *'abd* are limitation and want, and these can never be separated from his *dhāt* or 'essence'. Essentially, the *'abd* is determined and limited and he never becomes absolute or necessary!

The state of *fanā'* is produced when the seeker loses the

consciousness of his own self and of all determined beings and finds them merged in the Absolute Reality; and when consciousness returns, he knows that necessity and absoluteness are the essential attributes of God alone, the Absolutely Real.

An inferior state of *fanā'* may also be experienced. It is when the seeker finds his own 'determination' concealed in the Being of the Real, as the light of the stars is concealed by the light of the sun, so that the apparent is the real and the hidden is the *'abd*.

There is yet another state of *fanā'*. This is regarded as inferior even to the second type just mentioned. It is when the seeker regards his own attributes as the attributes of God; through them he sees, hears and talks; he identifies himself with God, and like Ḥallāj, asserts *Anā'l-Ḥaqq* or 'I am God',[8] for he loses sight of his own determination and gets attributed with the attributes of God, whereas in reality he is determined and is not absolute.

This fact has been clearly presented by Shaykh Muḥyi ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (Ibn'l-'Arabī) in his well known book the *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, in the chapter called 'Wisdom of Adam' or *Faṣṣ-i-Ādam*. He says that in the state of *fanā' fī-Allāh* or 'effacement in God', really speaking *'abdiyat* does not cease to exist; what really happens is that the *'abd* loses the consciousness of his determination and of his attributes. But in actual fact the *'abd* does not become the *rabb* (the Lord) and the veil of determination is never lifted, though it is not felt (to be there when one is) in the state of *fanā'*. Ibn 'Arabī says:

> The *'abd* will remain *'abd* whatever progress he might make,
> The Lord will remain the Lord however low he may descend.

Shabistarī, the author of *Gulshan-i-Rāz* says:

> Say not that contingent outsteps its limits,
> Contingent becomes not necessary, nor necessary contingent,
> He who is transcendent in spiritual mysteries,
> Says not this, for it would be an inversion of verities.

In the state of *fanā'* what passes in the being of the seeker cannot be expressed in words. It may only be said:

> It is rapture in rapture, abolishment in abolishment and effacement in effacement.

This means that the *dhāt* or 'essence' of the *'abd* and his qualities and attributes are abolished and effaced, and nothing remains of him. He is not aware of his acts or deeds, of the things he knows or does not know, and is not conscious of the essence or attributes of other

contingent beings, nor is he conscious of his own self. Rather, in this state of *fanā'*, if the seeker remains aware of his effacement, it will be a negation of the state of *fanā'* itself. Thus the Koranic truth is realised that:

> All that is on earth perishes, but abides (for ever) the Face of thy Lord. (Koran LV, 27)

8. *The contemplation of*

> All that is on the face of the earth will perish, but will abide (for ever) the Face of thy Lord. (Koran LV, 27)

This contemplation is useful for severing all wordly connections, complete abstraction, spiritual intoxication and all absorbing thought, total effacement or annihilation. This is how it is done: the seeker thinks that he is dead, has turned into a heap of dust which is scattered by the wind. He imagines also that the sky is cleft asunder, the stars scattered, and the sun with its dazzling light is extinguished, the form and composition of all things destroyed and God alone remains. This contemplation is helpful in producing the state of *fanā'* or total effacement in God.

9 and 10. *Contemplation (separately) of the following Koranic verses* is useful in bringing about the state of spiritual intoxication and annihilation:

> 1) The death from which ye flee will truly overtake you (Koran, LXII, 8)
>
> 2) Wherever ye are death will find you out, even if ye are in towers built up strong and high. (Koran, IV, 78)

11. *The contemplation for the 'unveiling the spirits' or murāqaba-i-Kashf-i-Arwāḥ*

Contemplation has been used by the Sufis sometimes for purposes other than the 'emptying of the *sirr*'. The Sufis of the Qādiriyya Order, for example, have used contemplation successfully for communion with souls of dead persons.[9] This is how it may be done: the seeker takes a bath, dresses himself in clean clothes, applies perfumes, goes into a secluded place, and sits on a prayer mat. He then strikes the word *Subbūḥun* on his right side, and the word *Quddūsun* on the left, then facing the sky he says: *'Rabbul-Malāikāt'* and finally strikes the word *wa ar-Rūḥ* on his heart. He then begins meditating and concentrates on the soul of the dead person he desires

to contact. Some of the Qādiriyya Sufis have claimed that they have tried this method and found that it works.

12. *Contemplation for overcoming the hardships of life:*[10] (all the above named conditions should be observed here too). After performing as many *rak'as* of the midnight prayer (*tahajjud*) as possible, the seeker should sit erect and strike the name of God *Yā Ḥayy*, on his right side and *Yā Wahhāb*, on the left side. This should be done a thousand times and then the devotee should meditate.

13. *Contemplation for composure and peace of mind and for warding off the tribulations of life:* observing the conditions mentioned above, the seeker should strike *Allāh* on his heart, and then closes his eyes and says *Lā*, drawing the sound from the navel up to the right shoulder. He then should say *ilāha* drawing out the sound from the brain; and lastly he strikes *illā Allāh* on the heart with force. Then *Al-Ḥayy* is said on the right side and *Al-Qayyūm* on the left one.

This contemplation brings about a change in the mind of the seeker and influences the surrounding circumstances; and thus helps to establish harmony and peace within and without.

THE CHISHTIYYA ORDER

The following contemplations are prescribed in the Chishtiyya Order of the Sufis:

1. *The contemplation of the proper Name—Allāh:* the seeker retires into a secluded place and contemplates that the word *Allāh* is written on his heart in golden letters and that he is reading it with zest and fervour, and that he is in the presence of *Allāh*. He should be engrossed enough in these thoughts as to lose awareness of his own individual being.

At the beginning of this contemplation, the heart is filled with the resplendent light of the golden letters of *Allāh*; then gradually the *alif* (of *Allāh*) disappears from sight and only a ring of light remains. This ring gradually assumes the form of a big circle, and in this circle many unseen worlds will be seen. The seeker should not pay attention to them and be lost in this spiritual exhibition. All this will result in complete absorption and the state of *fanā'* or total effacement will follow. The seeker attains the rank of persons who have attained total annihilation in God (*fanā'-fi-Allāh*).

2. *The contemplation of*

God is present, God is seeing and God is with me.

The seeker should think that God is always with him and that separation from God is impossible.

This is how this contemplation is to be done: the seeker closes his eyes and rivetting his attention on his heart, thinks that God is with him and is seeing him. He should be so engrossed in this thought that everything that is not God is naughted and he is no longer conscious of his own self. And even if for a moment he is not so absorbed in this thought, it will not be contemplation, but will be tantamount to a slumber of forgetfulness. In this way he will attain the all pervading consciousness of God.

3. *The contemplation called Naṣīra*:

The seeker should keep his eyes open and fix them on the tip of his nose. This is done to the extent that the black pupils of the eyes totally disappear, and the whiteness of the eyes alone remains. While doing this, the seeker meditates on the thought that God is present and is seeing him. By this contemplation the affectations of the heart are removed and peace or *ataraia* is experienced.

This contemplation is called *maqām-i-Naṣīra*. While doing this the seeker may sit with his legs folded under him as at prayers, or in the usual posture of sitting square with legs outstretched sideways.

4. *The contemplation called Maḥmūda:*

The seeker keeps his eyes open and fixes their gaze on the middle of the eye-brows and meditates in the same manner as described above. This contemplation is called *maqām-i-Maḥmūda*.

5. *The contemplation on*

I do not exist, exists He alone:

Khwāja Muḥammad Gīsu Darāz says:

Be quiet and meditate, 'I do not exist, God alone exists'.

The idea is apparent in the following verse:

Friends! By God, I am not, exist not I,
I am the real life, and the real secret, I am not a body.

I am a ray of uncontaminated light that has penetrated a clod of earth,
But how can the blind catch its glimpse?

I am the source of all light,
Neither am I the lamp, the wick, nor the oil.

By meditating in this way according to the principle stated in the Koran that

when Truth arrives, falsehood perishes (Koran XVII, 81),

then the note 'I am Thou' may emerge from the depths of one's soul and union with God is attained!

7. *The contemplation of Mi'rāj al-Arifīn (or the Ascension of the Adepts):*

Here you should sense that all the contingent beings are like mirrors and their attainments, physical and spiritual, seen therein, are but the reflections of God's Names and Attributes, or rather one should imagine the entire universe as a mirror, and see in it God with all His Names and Attributes, so that one may be included among these who have witnessed God (*ahl-i-mushāhada*).

Proceeding further, when one visualizes the universe, one should sense that one's 'ego' encompasses the entire universe and everything is contained in it. That is to say, the ego is a mirror of it. In the first case one was not, and now one witnesses Him in one's own ego (self).

One should go a step further. Imagining that all contingent beings as such are non-existent one does not consider them; one would rather consider them as mere forms of the manifestation of the Real Being, *Ḥaqq*, subsisting in and sustained by *Ḥaqq* alone. They are mere forms of the beauty and perfection of Reality and one is witnessing them in it.

A further step still would be to relegate one's own being and consider *Ḥaqq* as the only Real Being—the One who alone observes and witnesses. 'He is the observer and He is the observed'. In the following couplet Jāmī has expressed this state in a somewhat different strain:

Thou wert before my eyes, yet I did not see Thee,
Thou wert apparent in my heart, yet I missed Thee!
I scoured the entire world in search of Thee,
Not knowing that the entire world was Thee alone!

8. *Contemplation (murāqaba), Observation (Mushāhada), Inspection (Mu'āyana).*

(1) One should sit with one's legs folded under, as at prayer, and in communion with one's Shaykh, one should meditate on *'Alīm,*

Samī', *Baṣīr* (Knower, Hearer, Seer). When sufficient practice has been made in this meditation, then,

(2) one should sit in the same posture, and turn one's eyes towards the heart, then closing them, one should look into the heart with the inward eyes and think that one is witnessing God. One should contemplate like this until one becomes proficient in this meditation, then,

(3) one should sit in the same posture, and turn one's eyes towards the sky, keeping them open. One should then imagine that one's spirit has left the body, and passing through the skies, is witnessing God face to face.

If a seeker attains perfection in this practice, he will observe a green cord whose one end is in the seventh heaven and the other is in his own heart. This is regarded as a high stage of spiritual elevation and has always been an arcane secret with the adepts.

The first practice is called contemplation, the second observation and the third inspection. Khwāja Naṣīr ad-Dīn has related the contemplation described above from Pīr Khwāja Niẓām ad-Dīn.

9. *The contemplation of the Koranic verse*

Knoweth he not that God doth see (Koran XCVI, 14)

By this contemplation, the seeker comes to believe firmly that God is aware of all his acts, both overt and mental, and that God alone is his Inward and Outward Reality. As a consequence of this belief the seeker voluntarily avoids committing all acts prohibited by the *sharī'a* (Islamic law).

10. *The contemplation of the Koranic verse*

Hast thou not turned thy vision to thy Lord (Koran XXV, 45)

After contemplating over this verse an ecstatic has expressed his mental state in the following couplet:

It is Thou I am looking for, O Beloved!
Wherever I might cast my glance, the quest is for Thee!
My eyes are intended to look for Thee,
Pray reveal Thyself to me, whoever I might see!
A thousand windows are open for Thy view,
Whichever window I might select to look through, my object is Thou!
It is death if I miss Thy sight,
Far better that I gaze at Thee than die!

11. The Sufis of the Chishtiyya Order contemplate on the following verses of the Koran for emptying of the *sirr* and for attaining to perpetual presence with God:

(1) Whithersoever ye turn there is Allah's Countenance. (Koran II, 115)
(2) We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Koran L, 16)
(3) But We are nearer to him than ye and yet ye see not. (Koran LVI, 85)
(4) He is with you wheresoever ye be. (Koran LVII, 4)
(5) As also in your own selves: will ye not then see? (Koran LI, 21)

NOTES

1. *Misbāh al-Hayāt* (translation into Persian of *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*) Mahmūd ibn 'Ali al-Kāshāni, Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, 1890 A.H. 74–5.
2. Bukhārī.
3. *Shifā ul-'Alīl*, being the translation of *Qaul al-Jamīl*, Nizami Press, Kawnpur, 1291 A.H. p. 40.
4. *Mirṣad ul-'Ibad*, quoted from *Shamāil al-Atiqiya*, p. 275.
5. ibid.
6. ibid. 276.
7. ibid.
8. Views on Hallāj's assertion vary tremendously. Rūmī resolves the question through a divine revelation, saying, 'Pharaoh saw only himself and lost Me, and Husain saw only Me and lost himself'.
9. Communion with the souls of the dead is a deviation from real Sufism, and is not to be practised generally. The only and main thrust of Sufi teachings is love of God, and living in the perpetual presence of God.
10. This is not a basic or real or ultimate aim of Sufism either; vid. note 9 above.

CHAPTER VII

Emptying of the Sirr: Contemplation in the Naqshbandiyya Order

The Naqshbandiyya Sufis have their own way of doing contemplation. They suspend the breathing under the navel for a time and then, making full use of the perceptive faculties, they concentrate their attention on the simple, abstract and comprehensive meaning of the word *Allāh*, and then retain it in their thought for as long as possible, guard it and dwell on it. They practise this so much that they develop a special faculty for fixing with ease full attention on the presence of God every moment of their lives and for all the time. In their terminology they call it *dawām-i-Ḥudūr* (the Perpetual Presence of God).

But the process is difficult, and there are only a few persons who can abstract the meaning of *Allāh* from the word *Allāh*, and who can concentrate on the import or the abstract meaning of *Allāh* without paying attention to the letters or the sound of the word. In other words, the number of people who can fix their mental gaze on the named Reality, instead of the name itself, without being perturbed by stray thoughts and other affectations of the heart, is small.

The Naqshbandi Sufis advise those who are not able to do so to pray to God and contemplate in the following manner:

> O My Lord! Thou art my *ultima thule*, I approach Thee cutting myself asunder from all that is other than Thee.[1]

Some eminent Sufis advise such a person to think of the Void, or of pure light so that he may gradually develop the capacity to think on the import of the word *Allāh*, divesting it of its outward form and sound.

CONTEMPLATIONS OF THE SUFIS OF THE NAQSHBANDIYYA-MUJADDIDIYA ORDER:

The first contemplation of this Order is called *Murāqaba-i-Aḥadiyyat* or the 'contemplation of the Abstract Unity'. It is done as follows:

Sitting as at prayers, with face towards Mecca, the seeker closes his eyes and lips, cleaves his tongue to the palate, turns his attention towards his heart and keeping before his mind the meaning of the following words, meditates on them. 'Divine Grace is flowing over my heart from the Being Who is Single without any Similar, Separate without any like, Incomparable without any compeer, to Whom all qualities and perfections are attributed, Who is free from all defects and blemishes.'

Thus, thought is riveted fully on the heart and the heart is turned towards God. In this way, the seeker is engrossed in the thought of God, unhampered by any affectations of the heart. This contemplation is done without *dhikr* and without imagining the similitudinary form of the *Pīr* or Shaykh.

At first this contemplation is difficult for the beginner, but if he tries in earnest and perseveres in the attempt, the difficulties are removed soon from the path and he becomes so absorbed in the thought of God that he forgets his own self totally, saying:

> Away with thee, O blind intellect, as tonight in His thought
> A wonderfully nice privacy I have, wherein I myself am a stranger!

In the 'contemplation of the Abstract Unity' the heart turns towards the sky, for the reason that the *laṭīfas* of the 'world of Command' have their origin in a place above the *'Arsh* or the 'Divine Throne'. Hence, when the heart turns towards its source it naturally faces upwards, as Rūmī has said:

> Whoever is separated from his source,
> Would seek and work for (the days of) Union with it.

The place of the *laṭīfas* pertaining to the 'world of Command' is really above the *'Arsh*. But the Almighty God has placed them in the body of man also. They have a close connection with it, and the body and the mind are also endowed with these faculties. But due to the impurities of the physical body, and the unchasteness of the *nafs* or the 'carnal self' they get contaminated and forget their origin. When the light of *dhikr* and the attention (*tawajjuh*) bestowed by the Shaykh (or *Pīr*) purifies them again, they return to their source, and

Divine attraction draws them back speedily to their original source and union is attained. This happens only when the selfhood is completely annihilated, and as a result, eternity is attained. This is called *'Urūj* or 'ascent'.

According to Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, the origin of the heart is in the Illumination of Divine Actions (*tajallī-i-fa'lī*), the origin of the spirit (*rūḥ*) is the Divine Positive Attributes (*ṣifāt-i-thubūtiya*), that of the *sirr* is the Divine Essential Potentialities (*shuyūrāt-i-dhātiya*), that of the *khafī* is the Divine Negative Attributes (*ṣifāt-i-ṣalbiya*) and that of the *Akhfā* is the all embracing Divine Potentiality (*shān-i-jama'*). It is in view of these sources that the contemplation of these five *laṭīfas* or faculties is arranged in the following pages.

The First Contemplation on the heart

The way of this contemplation is done is as follows:

The seeker imagines that his heart is placed just opposite to the heart of the Prophet Muḥammad (may the blessings of God be upon him) and considering the souls of the Shaykhs of the Order as the glasses of the spectacles through which he sees, prays to God with faith and humility thus:

> O God! Let the grace of the Illumination of Divine Actions which flowed from the holy heart of Muḥammad over the heart of Ādam (may the blessings of God be on their holy spirits) flow over my heart also.

Then he should wait for the Divine Grace with composure of mind and sense that this grace is descending on his heart profusely. The seeker will soon begin to feel that his heart is lost in the Illumination of the Divine Actions, and it becomes plain to him that the human agency is naught, that he has no power or will of his own and that all things are done by the power of God who moves them and brings them to rest.

The condition of the heart so enlightened by the Illumination of Divine Actions is termed *Wilāyat-i-Ādam* or 'Saintship of Ādam'. The seeker who attains this saintship is said to be 'under the foot of Ādam'. The lights which flow over the heart are yellow in colour.

The Second Contemplation on the spirit

The seeker imagines that his spirit is placed just opposite to the spirit of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be God's blessings), and he says with great humility and faith:

> O God! let the grace of the Divine Positive Attributes which flowed from the spirit of Muhammad over the spirits of Abraham and Noah (peace and blessings of God upon their holy spirits) flow over my heart also.

When the seeker by constant practise of this Contemplation attains Union with Reality, he feels that his attributes and the attributes of all contingent beings have vanished and the Attributes of God alone exist. This state is called *fanā'-i-ṣifāt* or the 'effacement of attributes'. The seeker is said to be 'under the foot of Abraham'. The colour of this *laṭīfa* is red.

The Third Contemplation on the Sirr

The seeker imagines his own *laṭīfa* of *sirr* to be opposite the *sirr* of Muḥammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) and prays with humility and faith:

> O God! let the grace of the Potentialities of the Divine Essence which flowed from the *sirr* of Muḥammad over the *sirr* of Moses (may the peace and blessings of God be on their holy spirits) flow over my *sirr* also.

After achieving the effacement of the *sirr*, the seeker finds his own essence (*dhāt*), and the essence of all things that exist effaced in the Essence of God, and he sees God and God alone everywhere. This is the effacement in the Essence of God (*fanā'-fi'l-Dhāt*). The seeker who attains to it attains to the rank of a person who experiences the Unity of Being. The seeker who attains to Reality through this *laṭīfa* is regarded as 'under the foot of Moses'. The colour of this *laṭīfa* is white.

The Fourth Contemplation on the Khafī

The seeker should sense his own *laṭīfa* of *khafī* opposite to that of Muḥammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) and pray with faith and humility thus:

> O God! let the grace of the Divine Negative Attributes which flowed from the *laṭīfa khafī* of Muḥammad over the *khafī* of Jesus (may the peace and blessings of God be upon them) flow over my *khafī* also.

When the *khafī* is effaced in God, the abstraction, detachment or isolation (*tajrīd* and *tafrīd*) or transcendence of God becomes plain to the seeker. This is called *fanā' al-fanā'* or 'effacement of ef-

facement'. The seeker who attains it experiences *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd* or the 'Unity of Vision'. The colour of this *laṭīfa* is black.

The Fifth Contemplation on the Akhfā

The seeker should imagine that his *laṭīfa Akhfā* is opposite to the *Akhfā* of Muḥammad (may the peace and blessings of God be on him) and say with all humility and faith:

> O God! let the grace of the all pervading Comprehensive Divine Potentiality which flowed from the *Akhfā* of Muḥammad flow over my *Akhfā* also.

The seeker who attains to Reality through this *laṭīfa* realizes what is called *Baqā ba'd al-fanā'* or 'Abiding after annihilation'. He is supposed to be under the 'feet of Muḥammad' (peace be upon him). The colour of this *laṭīfa* is green.

Thus, the five stages of the Naqshbandi contemplation are 'effacement in Divine Action', 'effacement in Divine Attributes', 'effacement in Divine Essence', 'effacement of Effacement' and lastly 'Abiding after effacement'. Along with the Contemplation of the Abstract Unity, the above mentioned five contemplations are done in the above stated serial order. The *dhikr* of the proper name *Allāh*, and the *dhikr* of negation and affirmation, *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, are also done, so that the *laṭīfas* gain clarity, expanse and strength.

The *laṭīfas* gain clarity by constant recollection and they expand and shine by contemplation. When they are clarified they acquire brightness and attain purity (*ṭahārat*). True worship is possible only after such purity is attained, and by such worship alone is the seeker able to concentrate on the Absolute Reality, to the complete exclusion of all else, i.e. the phenomenal world, or all that is not God.

By contemplation of the *Aḥadiyyat* or Abstract Unity the seeker is able to traverse the 'Sphere of possibility' or *dāira-i-imkān*, the lower half of which is connected with the 'world of Creation' and is under the *'Arsh*, and the upper half is connected with the 'world of Command' and is above the *'Arsh*. The Koran says:

> His verily is all Creation and Commandment, Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. (Koran VII, 54)

As stated above, in the sphere of possibility the heart is the first to be attracted upwards, then mystical states are experienced, and by every such experience the seeker is removed further from the plane of

self-consciousness which is effaced. Gradually these experiences succeed one another in quick succession, and very soon they are experienced in an unbroken succession continuously. In the terminology of Sufism, these mystical experiences are called *wujūd-'adam* or 'Being and Not-being'.

This stage may be termed *fanā'*, though it is not total effacement. In this sphere, the seeker 'voyages in the Universe' *Sayr-i-afāqī*; he observes outside of his self, objects, lights and other attractive and desirable forms.[2] But he does not pay the least attention to them. On the other hand, he negates them, one and all, for the real Beloved is colourless and formless:

> No colour can be identified with my Beloved,
> Beware, Oh my heart! fall not a prey to any particular colour.

Plurality requires many colours, whereas Unity demands colourlessness. It indicates concentration (*jam'*); on the other hand colour creates difference (*farq*), and indicates diversity. When the heart feels itself in the presence of God, and no affectation of the mind disturbs its composure with God continually for an hour and a half, it indicates that the 'sphere of possibility' has been completed; in other words, it means that the heart of the seeker has now transcended the world of plurality.

The Contemplation of the Compresence or Co-existence of God: Murāqaba-i-Ma'iyat:

When the 'sphere of possibility' is transcended, the 'sphere of minor saintship' (*Dāira-i-wilāyat-i-ṣughrā*) begins. It is the saintship of the saints of God. At this stage, the seeker cruises in the 'Umbra' of the Illuminations of the Names and Attributes of God; and performs the Contemplation of the compresence of God.

Bearing in mind the meaning of 'He is with you wheresoever ye be', the seeker turns towards his heart and meditates thus:

> Grace is flowing over my heart from the Eternal Essence that is with us, and with all our *laṭīfas*, and with each and every hair of our body, and with each and every particle of the world and that encompasseth all things.

The seeker contemplates in this way for ten to thirty minutes daily and bears this in mind, whether he is sitting or reclining, standing or walking, until the sense is firmly rooted in his mind and he begins to feel the compresence of God at all times, and his faith in God attains

perfection, as is revealed in the *Ḥadīth*, 'Perfect faith is attained when you begin to feel that God is with you wheresoever you be'.

During this period, the seeker is engaged in the *dhikr* of the proper Name *Allāh*, and the *dhikr* of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, bearing in mind the compresence of God. While doing this his attention should be directed towards his heart and the attention of the heart should be riveted on God.

In the stage of 'minor saintship', the 'Unity of Being' is revealed. The seeker feels a strong yearning for God, his separate self is naughted and eddy of self ceases; the heart is wounded by the shaft of Divine Love; and thus bruised, the selfhood surrenders and dies and now God becomes all in all for him. He proclaims:

> God is all; there is naught beside Him (*Lā mawjūd illā Allah*).

This stage is called *fanā'-i-Qalb* or the 'effacement of the heart'.

Mawlana Jalālad-Dīn Rūmī has expressed this state thus:

> What is to know of the Unity of God?
> It is to extinguish oneself in the presence of the One.
> Shouldst thou desire to be as bright as day,
> Burn out thy separate existence like the candle of night,
> Since separate existence brings in violent inebriation.
> Reason forsakes the mind, shame, the heart;
> He who loses his separate existence,
> The result of what he does is always full of bliss.

In this state of the 'effacement of the heart' the seeker does not exist, God is all.

> God stayed back, the rest passed away!
> By God, nothing exists save God!

It is at this stage that the seeker 'voyages in his own self' (*Sayr-i-Anfusī*). This has been alluded to in the Koran thus:

> As also in your own selves, will ye not then see? (Koran LI, 21)

As in the state of 'the voyage in the universe' (*Sayr-i-Afāqī*) the seeker observes various objects, lights and desirable forms external to his own self, in the 'voyage within the self' (*Sayr-i-Anfusī*) the seeker observes them in his own self. This is how the Sufis interprete the following verse of the Koran:

> Soon will we show them our Signs in the Universe (*āfāq*) and in their own selves (*anfus*) until it becomes manifest to them that it is the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) (Koran XLI, 53)

The compresence of God with all objects is definitely established by the Koran. But the *Mutakallimun* 'Dialecticians' consider it as compresence in knowledge, and the Sufis regard it as compresence of the Very Essence of God. The contemplative seeker need not, at this stage, enquire into the quidality of the nature of this compresence. He may just contemplate that God is with us, with His presence that is categorically asserted by the Koran, and which is quite in accordance with His nature about which He Himself has said: 'There is nothing like unto Him'. This may be illustrated by a simple example. In a dust-storm the dust is carried by the wind, and the wind is with every particle of dust, though it is not seen by the naked eyes. So also, the soul that is with every particle of the body, sustains the body and is not seen. As Rūmī has said:

> The Soul is not hidden from the body nor the body from the soul,
> And yet, to see the soul is not possible for anybody.

If the wind and the soul, due to their fine and subtle nature are not perceptible, how is it possible then to perceive the compresence of the Essence that is Single without any similar, separate without any like, that does not resemble any entity and no entity resembles it? But this much is certain, that the Eternal Essence is with us and maintains us all. This idea is expressed by Ra'ūf Aḥmad Raf'at, an eminent Sufi of the Naqshbandiyya Order:

> Raf'at, we believe that God is with us,
> To help comprehension, here is an instance,
> Look at a dust storm, what maintains it is wind,
> Similarly, the soul maintains the body and God maintains the soul.

The Contemplation of Aqrabiya (or Closeness of God)

After the 'minor saintship' is attained the seeker steps into the sphere of 'major saintship' (*wilāyat-i-kubrā*).

'Major saintship' is really the saintship of the Prophets (may the peace of God be on their souls). As the seeker is not a prophet, he enters this sphere as a follower of a particular prophet, in his company and as his henchman. This sphere consists of three circles and an arc. In the first circle, which is the circle of Names, Attributes and Potentialities of God, the seeker contemplates over the intimate closeness of God with him and with every object.

Bearing in mind the sense of the verse 'We are nearer to him than

his jugular vein' (Koran L, 16), the seeker sits in the posture of prayer and meditates:

> Grace is flowing over my *nafs* and the other five *laṭīfas* from a Being nearer to me than my jugular vein.

During this period, the repetition of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* verbally as well as mentally, using the method described elsewhere in this work, is helpful. The seeker feels the intimate and watchful presence of God, grace flows over his heart in abundance, the love of God is aroused, ascension and descension take place, in fact these mystical experiences become the order of the day. But these experiences are calm and unintoxicating compared with those felt during the period, when the seeker was engaged in the contemplation of the *laṭīfa* of the heart. In this first circle, the *Tawḥīd-i-shuhūdī* or 'Unity of Vision' is revealed to the seeker and he apprehends directly the reflections of the Essence of God in the forms of contingent beings. In this stage, the seeker considers the world as a mirror in which he observes the beauty of his Eternal Beloved. But everybody knows that in this mirror the reflection of the Beloved alone can be seen. Maghribī sings:

> When the reflection of the Friend's face appeared in the mirror
> He could not help gazing at His own reflection.

This idea is expressed by Maulānā Ra'ūf Aḥmad Raf'at in the following quatrain:

> Raf'at! why does thy heart mourn in His love?
> Fix the gaze at Him! Why dost thou feel forsaken?
> The entire universe is a mirror of His projection,[3]
> Whatever thou seest is but His own reflection!

Mirzā Maẓhar Jānjānān exclaims:

> What a free and strange spectacle does the mirror present,
> The Beloved is engrossed in seeing His reflection and the reflection is astonished at Him!

Khwāja Mīr Dard says:

> Make us Thy mirror so that we may face Thee!
> And reflect all Thy moods and phases!

The Contemplation of Love: Murāqaba-i-Maḥabba

In the second 'circle' is the contemplation of love is done. Bearing in mind the sense of the verse:

> When He loves them as they love Him (Koran V, 57)

the seeker says with faith and humility:

> Grace is flowing over my *nafs* from a Being Who loves me and I love Him and Who is the Object of the second circle of the major saintship and is the source of the first circle.

In this second circle, mystical states grow stronger and spiritual relation reaches the point where the seeker finds his individual existence naughted and effaced and realizes in himself the truth of the aphorism that

> Unity of God is attained when relations with all else are dropped.

Khwāja 'Ubaid-allāh Aḥrār has observed: 'it is easy to say, "I am God" but difficult to surrender selfhood.' When the seeker steps into the 'Second Circle', he finds that his selfhood has become a distant and remote thing, and in union with Jalālad-Dīn Rūmī, he cries out:

> Manṣūr insisted on the gallows: 'I am God'
> I am looking for the gallows where I can shout 'God is Absolute'.

As the Koran says:

> Say, Truth has (now) arrived and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish. (Koran XVII, 81)

And Jalālad-Dīn Rūmī advises:

> 'Be not thyself!' That is the height of thy perfection,
> 'Lose thy identity in Him!' That is Union (with God)!

The contemplation of the 'Third Circle' is done in the same way as that of the contemplation of the 'Second Circle', the only difference being that in the third circle, the seeker thinks of the objective of the third circle which is the origin of the second circle.

When the seeker steps into the third circle, the effacement of the self is greater and all the vices of the self are changed into virtues. The vicious *nafs* is made 'tranquil, or restful self, well-pleased with itself and well-pleasing to God.' That is why a gnostic has said:

> Thy salvation lies only in rising above thyself, otherwise,
> The performance in a day of prayers of a century will not avail.

After the contemplation of the 'third circle', the contemplation of the 'arc' is done in the same way: the seeker says with faith:

> Grace is flowing from the Being that is the Objective of the arc, the arc being the origin of the third circle and of the major saintship.

When the seeker reaches the arc of the circle of major saintship, he attains the perfection of the total effacement of the self, and thereafter he never applies the words *I* or *we* to himself and enters into Islam in its most vivid, acute, intense and living stage—the real Islam or *Islam-i-ḥaqīqī*. He surrenders completely and thus attains to the dignity of Islam.[4]

His mental vision is widened to such a degree that he feels that it takes into its stride the earth and the sky, in fact the entire creation! Sarmad has described this state in the following words:

> The priests say that the Prophet ascended the skies,
> Sarmad says the skies were lost in the Prophet's mind.

Khwāja Naṣīr ad-Dīn, Chirāgh-i-Delhī, identifying love with God says:

> In Naṣīr ad-Dīn's breast there is room for none except love
> How strange! to see an ocean contained in a bubble.

Another mystic has expressed a similar idea as follows:

> The entire universe cannot bear a reflection of Thy beauty,
> I am surprised to find Thee contained in the sanctuary of my breast.

It is at this stage of the major saintship that the transformation of the *nafs*, from being the appetitive, sensual self takes place, and it is embellished with laudable and angelic attributes, after being cleansed of blameable and animal qualities. This is called the 'purification of the self'. Thus it appears that the final purification of the self, according to the Mujaddidiyya Order, is possible only at the stage of 'major saintship'. Complete self-effacement is attained at this stage only.

The self is transformed into *nafs-i-lawwāma* or the 'accusatory self' and then finally becomes *nafs-i-muṭma'inna* or the 'tranquil self'. The mystical state of accepting God's doings with patience, thankfulness and without demur becomes usual for him. The seeker takes every hardship he is faced with as a latent blessing. He bears whatever comes his way calmly and patiently. Meekly he treads the path of God's Will. He requires no external proof to accept the burden of duties imposed by the *sharī'a*. Their truth becomes self evident to

him both from reason and intuition. He is relieved from the storm and stress of emotions. He believes with the fullest conviction in the promises of God made to the righteous. His selfhood is totally effaced and God becomes everything for him. He realizes completely that Existence and the concomitants of Existence (attributes and actions) belong to God alone, and it becomes evident to him that it is difficult, in fact impossible, to apply the words *mine*, *yours*, *I* or *we* to himself or to others. In his own essence he finds nothing but 'want' and 'poverty' (*faqr*), and therefore he holds only himself to blame. This is Islam in its essence, its most living form.

The *sulūk* or the 'spiritual journey' of the early Sufis of the Naqshbandiyya Order leads the seeker up to the stage of 'major saintship' only. Further stages were revealed to Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī by the special grace of God, the Beneficent. Accordingly, the Mujaddid has said:

Do not be shocked if thou seest
A king visiting an old woman!

What he means is that the Grace of God is ever flowing, it never ceases, and there is no limit to the perfections of God. Whatever is proper at a given stage is revealed to His elects by the Infinite Grace of God. It does not follow that the eminent Sufis of the Naqshbandiyya Order whose *sulūk* was limited to the stage of 'major saintship' were imperfect in any way. The difference between the gnosis of the earlier Sufis and that of the Mujaddid appears to be that of brevity and detail. For some Sufis it is made possible to attain to Reality and reach the Absolute after a brief voyage, while others are made to cruise through the landmarks of the *sulūk* in greater detail and are then only allowed to pay homage and do obeisance at the threshold of the Absolute. In other words, some are given detailed knowledge of all the stages of *sulūk*, while others are awarded the same knowledge in a compendious but perfect form. And once the Reality is attained the Elects exclaim:

When we have attained Thee we have attained all, and do not need anything else.

An ecstatic has exclaimed:

Thou makest me mad in Thy love and then grant me both the worlds,
Of what use are they to a mad man!

Thus, when the Adepts reach the ultimate union, they have at their

disposal the treasure house of the knowledge of God. They may now make use of it, or may not feel the need of it.

Sulūk consists of the following ten stages:[5]

(1) Repentance (or conversion) *Tauba*; i.e., turning to God (*ināba*)
(2) Abstinence (*zuhd*)
(3) Austerity (*riyāda*)
(4) Piety (*war'a*)
(5) Contentment (*qanā'a*)
(6) Trust in God (*tawakkul*)
(7) Patience (*ṣabr*)
(8) Thankfulness or Praise (*shukr*)
(9) Satisfaction or Acquiescence (*riḍa, taslīm*)
(10) Love (*maḥabba*)

The adepts who have passed through these stages are perfect in *sulūk*. Unless these stages are fully covered, perfect saintship is not conferred. There should be no doubt in the sainthood of those who have fully attained these stages.

Contemplation of the name; 'The Outward', Al-Ẓāhir:

All the stages of the minor and major saintship are related to God's 'Outwardness' (*ẓāhiriya*). These are the manifestations of His Name, viz., the Outward. After traversing them, the contemplation of the name, the Outward, is done as follows: The seeker contemplates:

> Grace is flowing over my *nafs* and the other five *laṭīfas* from a Being who is the Reality of the Name the 'Outward'.

This contemplation strengthens and widens the internal spiritual state.

Contemplation of the Name: 'The Inward', Al-Bāṭin: (The Superior Saintship or the Saintship of the Angels)

After the voyages of the major saintship comes the travel of the Name, the 'Inward'. It is styled the 'Superior Saintship' or (*wilāyat-i-'Ulyā*), or the 'Saintship of the Angels', (*wilāyat-i-Malā'ika*). Here, the purification and perfection of the three elements (air, water and fire) is done, leaving that of the element earth for a later stage. The contemplation of the Name 'The Inward' is done in the following way:

> Grace is flowing over the three elements from a Being Who is the Reality behind the name, 'The Inward', and Who is the object of the Superior Saintship.

At this stage, reciting the article of the Creed *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* orally, and the performing of supererogatory prayers are useful for spiritual ascension. Now the seeker's acts are motivated not only by what is permissible in law (*rukhṣat-i-sharī'a*), but they also aim at performing what is approved, though not prescribed (*'azīma*). Performing what is permissible is human, but doing the 'said approved things' means one is raised to the rank of the angels; and the more one becomes like them, the more do one's spiritual powers (or energy) increase. At this stage, ascension and descension of the three elements (air, water, fire) take place and the 'inward' (*bāṭin*) of the seeker experiences a wonderful expansion; he becomes more like the beings of the 'elevated assembly' and according to his aptitude he begins to see them, converse with them and perceive their angelic secrets which are ordinarily hidden. At the stage of the minor and major saintship, Illumination of Divine Attributes (*tajallī-i-ṣifātī*) is experienced, and in the stage of superior saintship, the Illumination of the Being or *Dhāt* of *Allāh* is sometimes seen; then the lover loses all consciousness:

> A flicker of Thy Beauty reduced Mount Sinai to dust!
> How can Thy poor lover remain as he was?

Grace overwhelms the seeker in surges after surges of mountainous waves of a mighty ocean, his selfhood is annihilated, but, in spite of this, he retains full consciousness. This means that as far as the seeker's selfhood is concerned, it is fully effaced and annihilated, but he attains union with God, and hence remains conscious. This stage is well expressed in the following verse:

> Where are those yearnings? Whither are those wails?
> Both have vanished into thin air!
> The torrents of Divine Grace,
> Which keep pouring endlessly,
> Have washed away all yearnings and wails,
> Nothing remains but a sense of purity,
> Drowned in the sea of bewilderment,
> I feel I know nothing!

When, by the Grace of God and the attention of his spiritual guide, the seeker completes the voyages of the *sulūk* of this stage, he is provided with wings for higher spiritual flights. One of them helps him to journey in the region of the Divine Name, the Outward, which is the farthest end of the Major Saintship; and the other enables him to travel in the region of the Divine Name, the Inward. After passing

through the regions of the Divine Names and Attributes, the seeker approaches the plane of Divine Essence or *Dhāt*, which is the *ultima thule* of his *sulūk* or the spiritual journey. The voyage in the plane of Pure Essence is styled the 'Plane of the Perfections of Prophet-hood' (*Dāira-i kamālāt-i-Nubuwwa*). This will show the dizzy height and the lofty excellence, the dignity and elevation of the rank of prophethood. Travel in this sphere is possible even for one who is not a prophet. But this is a mere shadow or semblance (*ḍimnī*) and not the real thing. That is why it has been said that one who is not a prophet may never reach even the lowest rank of a prophet, however perfect he may be. Such is the difference between prophethood and sainthood (*wilāyat*).

Contemplation of the Perfections of Prophethood (Murāqaba-i-Kamālāt-i-Nubuwwa)

Thus, only in the 'plane of the perfections of Prophethood' is the Illumination of the Divine Essence experienced. That is to say that the Illumination of the Divine Essence, without the curtain of Names and Attributes, is experienced! At this stage, the contemplation is done in this way:

> Grace is flowing over the element earth from the Pure Essence which is the objective to be gained at the Plane of the Perfections of Prophethood.

By pure Essence is meant the Essence which transcends all names and attributes, determinations and modes. The attainment of the vision of the Pure Essence, even for a fraction of a second, is a great boon, and is far superior to all the stages and states of sainthood. At this stage, one senses the Presence of God devoid of all directions, an all-encompassing Presence! The restlessness of the quest disappears, and a calm, perfect certainty and faith pervade the entire being of the devotee.

The gnosis attained at this stage is just the absence of all knowledge; the seeker, drowned in a sea of bewilderment, feels that he knows nothing; all his mental states become indistinguishable, colourless, devoid of all quality and indeterminate. The Pure Essence is above all comprehension. The Koran says:

> No vision can grasp Him; but His grasp is over all vision. (Koran VI, 103)

Hence, the result of the attempt to know Him is stupefaction:

However great our heavenly knowledge be,
It cannot penetrate Thy sanctuary!
Saints blessed with vision and with light divine,
Reach no conception adequate to Thee (Jāmī)

The climax of perception is the inability to perceive. 'Admission of the inability to perceive is itself a sort of perception.'

At this stage discursive knowledge becomes self-evident. The knowledge at this stage is the knowledge of the laws, or, the *sharī'as* of the prophets. The inward spiritual state is expanded and elevated to such an extent that as compared to it all the states of sainthood sink into insignificance.

In spite of the absence of all experiences and the feeling of hopelessness and despair, owing to the realization of one's own insignificance, face to face union (meeting?) with God is attained at this stage. The union that was attained before reaching this stage appears illusory, imaginary and shadowy, without any substance and just like a mirage. All the commandments of the *sharī'a*, things of the unseen, viz., the existence of God, His Attributes, and the things reported by the Prophet, viz., the happenings of the Day of Resurrection, heaven, hell etc. become self-evident, like things directly observed. Not the slightest doubt of His existence is felt, and there remains no need for any argument to prove His existence. God's existence becomes as clear as the daylight; and the existence of things looks like the reflections on the face of a mirror. The said reflections, or forms that appear in a mirror, exist in thought or imagination alone, but the mirror has an external existence of its own. Still, the reflections are sensed first, and then the mirror. But at this stage, the mirror is sensed first and the reflections later. That means that the existence of God becomes self-evident, and the existence of things appear as an abstraction merely.

This is the dizzy heights where the Prophets stand. The followers of the Prophets attain to it as being their heirs and disciples. Here, Unity of Existence and Vision (*tawḥīd-i-wujūdī wa shuhūdī*), which are experienced in the stage of the sainthood, are left behind. Pure and Absolute Unity dawns on the devotee. This grace is bestowed directly and without intermediacy on the element earth, others get their share through intermediaries as disciples. This will indicate the high rank and dignity of the earth. In this world, it holds a low rank, but in the order of Precedence before God, the Almighty, it is given a proportionately high rank. No other element can always witness the Illumination of the Divine Essence. It has been said:

The scion of the earth has risen to celestial heights
Leaving time and space behind!

That is why humility, meekness, gentleness and softness of heart are regarded as of high moral value. How well is this put by a Sufi poet:

How can a stone blossom in the spring?
Be dust, so that variegated flowers may sprout.

In this connection the advice of an adept is valuable:

Turn thyself into dust beneath His holy feet,
Shake off the crust of egotism!
He who sacrifices himself at His bidding,
Spiritualizes his entire physical existence!
Every particle of dust lying in His path shines resplendently like the sun,
Every bubble carries within a mighty ocean,
Be a particle facing the rays of the Sun of His Being.
Or a drop in the ocean of His Existence!

In the third circle, which is the circle of major saintship, the sense of presence is lost and is not perceived, just as the sense of the presence of his own self, which, though ever present, is not perceived. The voyage of the *laṭīfas* is now completed and they are joined to their source; due to this union the sense of the Presence does not remain. This is because presence is felt, and observation may be made when there is some distance. But when union is attained and distance does not remain, how is it possible to feel the presence or make observation? As a result, belief in the Unseen is attained. But there is a vast difference between this belief in the Unseen and the belief of the common man. Because the belief of the seeker is attained after his having felt the presence and after direct observation of it, and is the result of the Union of the *laṭīfas* and their source. All this the common man does not have. The Mujaddid has given the following example to illustrate this.

Suppose a man has put his hands behind his back. He knows for certain that those are his hands. This is an illustration of the belief of the common man in the Unseen. When he brings his hands before him and observes them with his own eyes, he provides an illustration of the belief of a person who has made spiritual progress, and occupies the middle stage in *sulūk*, i.e. of a person who regards direct observation as the highest stage of *sulūk*. But there is a higher still stage which is far more certain than this, and may be illustrated thus:

the hands which were placed before his eyes are brought closer and closer to the eyes and are eventually placed upon them, so that though the eyes cannot now see them directly, still, the degree of certainty of their presence is much increased and belief in the unseen, in a sense, is gained. Such is the belief of the elect few—the *Muqarrabūn*—those nearest to God.

The Contemplation of the Perfection of the Apostles (Murāqaba-i-Kamālāt-i-Risāla)

In the circle of the Perfections of the Apostles, contemplation is done in this way:

> Grace is flowing from the Pure Essence, which is the objective of the perfections of the Apostles, on my 'unitary state' (*hai'at-i-waḥdānī*)

The 'unitary state' or *hai'at-i-waḥdānī* comes to the devotee when the ten *laṭīfas* of the devotee assume a particular form through the cleansing of the heart, and the illumination of the spirit, and the 'abiding after passing away' of the *khafī* and the *akhfā*, and after the purification of the self and the purity of the four elements. This may be illustrated by an example: if a person desires to prepare a drug by mixing various medicines possessing different properties, he will first choose the ingredients, cleanse them and then mix them in proper proportions with sugar or honey as their base. In this way, the drug will be prepared and it will have a property different from the individual properties of the various ingredients out of which it is made. In the same way, the ten *laṭīfas* of the devotee assume a different complexion and enable him to soar to higher spiritual planes. At this stage, the whole body experiences the mystical states of ascension, descension and absorption through which the *laṭīfas* pass.

Here, everything depends entirely on the Grace of God, nothing depends on any act or deed of the devotee.

> All bounties are in the hand of God; He granteth them to whom He pleaseth. (Koran III, 73)

And to whomsoever He grants them, he is blessed with the robes of divine knowledge and pure ignorance:

> Such ignorance is superior to so-called knowledge,
> It is a wisdom that leads to the gnosis of God,
> Nay, it is not gnosis but a wine
> That inebriates a blank mind.

If this stage of development were to be compared to gnosis,

> one can only speak of burnt clay against the sky!

It will be remembered that in the stage of minor saintship, the devotee came in contact with 'umbra' (*aẓlāl*). In the stage of major saintship one comes in contact with 'Penumbra', or the real Light, and now, one has to leave behind even this and deal with the Unseen of the Unseen (*ghayb al-ghayb*). All these are the various stages of faith based on direct observation (*īmān-i-shuhūdī*). But this faith may be compared to the full moon that rises in the sky of saintship and the real faith (*īmān-i-ḥaqīqī*) is like the Sun which shines on the sky of prophethood.

At this stage, a feeling of uneasiness and restlessness may be experienced, and instead of satisfaction on attaining union, frustration is felt. It is said about the Prophet of Islam that,

> He was always sad and pensive.

This is the effect of the Illumination of the Divine Essence. At this stage, the reading of the Holy Koran and turning the heart towards God while performing obligatory and supererogatory prayers with humility and faith are very useful. After this stage, the contemplation of the Perfections of the *ūlūl-'azm* (the Apostles of inflexible purpose) is done.

Contemplation of the Perfections of the ūlūl-'Azm

This contemplation is done in the following way:

> Grace is flowing from the Pure Essence, the objective of the Perfections of the *ūlūl-'Azm* over my unitary state.

This is the stage of the 'Apostles of inflexible purpose' (*anbīa-i-ulūl-'azm*). It may be granted to whom God pleases from among the heirs and followers of these apostles and as a sheer act of bounty.

In the aforementioned three stages viz., the Perfections of the Prophets, the Apostles and the Apostles of inflexible purpose, everything depends on the sheer Grace of God. He alone reveals the arcane secrets of these stages to whom He likes. As the Koran says:

> All bounties are in the hands of God. He granteth them to whom He pleaseth. And God careth for all and He knoweth all things. (Koran III, 73)

As a lover of God has said:

> The Beloved falls into your lap of His own sweet will,
> It is not your strength, your entreaties or your money that brings Him.

In all these three Circles or Spheres, divine grace is so subtle that it is not possible for the mind to comprehend it. Here, the climax of perception is the inability to perceive. As Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī has said:

> The utmost reaches possible for reason's quest is certainly not God.

Ignorance, purity of thought, serenity and composure of mind, acceptance of what the Prophet has brought, perfection of the inward connection (*nisbat-i-bāṭin*), a state devoid of all quality and colour, hopelessness and despair to know the Essence of God—this is what the devotee experiences at this stage. That is why it is regarded by the seekers as beyond all states and stages. It transcends all mystical states, whether it be the state of *ittiḥād* (unity), or of identity, which the upholders of the Unity of Being suppose exists between the Necessary and the contingent, or the state of *ẓilliya* (umbration) which the exponents of the Unity of Vision (*waḥdat-i-shuhūd*) maintain exists between the Creator and the creatures. It now becomes clear that 'The *'abd* is *'abd* and the Lord is the Lord', and 'how can mere dust be compared to Heavens?'

The stage of the Perfections of the Apostles is more subtle and colourless compared to the other stages. It is due to this colourlessness that the seeker who has attained this high stage cannot perceive it and imagines himself devoid of any mystic relation (*nisbat*). That is why the Mujaddid once said:

> After reaching this stage, it is possible that those who are nearest to God may seek distance from God, and those who have attained Union with God may desire separation. This is due to the fact that they cannot stand unabashed Union with God.

The fruit of this stage is the strengthening of faith and the chastening and bracing up of correct beliefs. It may be noted that all the great Sufis of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya Order believe that to attain this high stage the Grace of God is necessary, and they believe also that when God bestows this grace on anybody, it is through some 'Perfect Man'.[6] It is he who lifts the veil from the face of the Beloved. That is why it has been said of a perfect spiritual guide that:

> He is the medium through whom you have a glimpse of the Beloved,

> He is the bridge between the seeker and the Sought.

Another adept has confessed:

> It was he who showed His handsome face,
> Without veil to a striken man like myself!

It means that the way is opened through the medium of the spiritual guide only, and it is through him alone that this grace is bestowed. That is why it has been said:

> Thy benevolence even for a moment is more valuable
> Than a thousand years spent in prayer!

The advice given by adepts is:

> First choose a guide and then start the journey.

Contemplation of the Reality of the Ka'ba (Murāqaba-i-Ḥaqīqat-i-Ka'ba)

After completing the circle of the Perfections of the *ūlūl 'azm*, the seeker enters, with the Grace of God, into the Circle of the Reality of the Ka'ba. Here his voyage is visionary, rather than actually physical. Contemplation is done in this way:

> Grace is flowing from the Pure Essence, before whom all creatures prostrate and Who is the Objective behind the Reality of the *Ka'ba*, over my unitary state.

By the 'Reality of the Ka'ba' is meant the manifestation of the Majesty and Glory of God, the Almighty. It is this Glory and Majesty before whom all contingent beings prostrate. According to the *Ḥadīth* God has said: 'Glory is my garment'.

> Pride and Prowess become Him
> Whose domain is Eternal and Who is Self-sufficient unto Himself.

To face the sanctum of His Glory and Majesty, and to affirm the human self is impossible, in fact it is sheer folly to think of it even in this august presence. Here even the Attributes, which are closely related to the Essence, cannot be conceived. Hence, how would it be possible to think of the existence of any other object? The House of the Ka'ba in Mecca, before which we apparently prostrate, is only a manifestation of the Reality behind the Ka'ba and that is identical with the Essence of Allah. Everybody knows that a form or an appearance has a close relation to the reality whose form or appearance it is. It is thus clear that the object before whom one's genuflexion

and prostration in prayers are done is not the material House of the Ka'ba, but the Reality behind it. In spite of being free from all quality and quantity, and thus inexpressible and incomparable, this Reality is yet somehow mystically manifested to the world of phenomena. As an ecstatic has said:

> The reflection of the light of Reality in the phenomenal,
> Is but a mystery of love, an arcane secret!

The point is also expressed thus:

> The phenomenal is a bridge to the Real.

The phenomenal is but a means which the Eternal makes use of to attract the slaves of the world of quality and quantity towards Itself. The physical House of the Ka'ba, then, is a link between the seeker and the Sought, because of its relation to the Reality. But according to Sufi interpretation so is the 'Perfect Man' (*al-insān al-Kāmil,* i.e. the evolved or conscious being)[7] a link between the seeker and the Sought.

The secrets of this stage cannot be disclosed. Words can not express them. They transcend thoughts, imagination and perception. If an analogy must be given, it may be said that they are like the beautiful eyes of the beloved which inebriate her lover and make him lose his sanity. As a lover has said:

> Her beautiful eyes have so bewildered me that
> After forsaking everything I had to quit my own self!

Perhaps that is the reason why the Ka'ba is dressed in black. An ecstatic has said:

> Although thou hast appeared in black,
> Still, ye art the one who giveth light to the moon?

When the devotee realizes this truth and is identified with it, that is to say, when after annihilation of the self, he abides in Reality, he finds the entire universe prostrating before him. In reality the prostration is before the Illumination of the Divine Essence alone.

Contemplation of the Reality of the Koran (Murāqaba-i-Ḥaqīqat-i-Qur'ān)

After the Circle of the Reality of the Ka'ba, the Circle of the Reality of the Koran is revealed. The method of contemplation is as follows:

Grace is flowing from the Pure Essence, the Source of In-

> comparable Pervasiveness and the Objective behind Reality of the Koran, over my unitary state.

When an adept attains this stage, he receives the blessings, and perceives the light of the Eternal Speech of God and learns its arcane secret. He finds that every word of the Koran is expressive, significant and pregnant with meaning. And when he recites the Koran, his tongue assumes the role of the tree from which Moses heard the voice: 'Verily I am thy Lord' (Koran XX, 12), and God speaks through the tongue of the devotee. The Prophet has said that God says: 'I become his (the *'abd's*) tongue through which he speaks'. The entire body of such a devotee becomes like the tongue, and he feels a burden within him, as if 'Soon shall We send down to thee a weighty message' (Koran LXXIII, 5) has been cast on his heart.

In this connection, the Mujaddid has said:

> God has spoken to me in a way that no ear has heard, and no eye has seen.

Another prominent shaykh of this Order, Ḥaḍrat Ghulām 'Alī Shāh has said:

> Twice I have heard the Speech of God, but there was neither sound in it nor did it contain any word.

Ḥaḍrat Khwāja Ma'ṣūm says:

> God speaks to His elect in a way that is always different from the way He speaks to any other.

At this stage, the meaning of the Abbreviated Letters of the Koran (found at the beginning of some suras such as *Alif-lām, Ṭa-ha, Yā-sīn*) is revealed, but this cannot be expressed in words.

The Contemplation of the Reality of Prayers (Murāqaba-i-Ḥaqīqat-i-Ṣalāt)

In this Circle, contemplation is done in the following way:

> Grace is flowing over my unitary state from the Perfection of the Incomparable Pervasiveness of the Pure Essence which is the Objective sought by the Reality of Prayers.

It is impossible to describe in words the dignity, elevation and all-pervasiveness of this stage. The Reality of the Ka'ba and the Reality of the Koran are only its contributories. The adept who is blessed with this Reality, while performing his prayer (*ṣalāt*), goes out of this

ephemeral world, and steps into the Everlasting Home, and in accordance with the injunction of the Prophet, 'Worship God as if thou seest Him' enjoys the Presence of his Lord. He sees Him with his inward eyes, there being no veil hiding the one from the other. The Incomparable Pervasiveness is seen in Its sweetness, splendour and glory. This condition is regarded as quasi-vision; for the actual beatific vision of God, according to the teachings of this Order, is to be enjoyed by the righteous in the Hereafter only. A sample of it is meted out in prayers.

When the adept begins his prayers, he washes his hands off of both the worlds, turns his back on them, and reciting *Allāhu Akbar* (God is great) with zest, comes in the Presence of the Mighty Sovereign of the Universe, and realizing His glory, majesty and grandeur, and his own humbleness on the other hand, he sacrifices himself on the altar of His Love.

While actually reciting the prayers, the devotee reminds himself of God's greatness and begins to address Him; his tongue becomes like the tree of Moses through which God spoke. When he bends on his knees in the Presence of God to express his deep reverence, humility and faith, he attains a high degree of nearness to God and with praise on his lips he stands up. Again, in order to express his extreme humility and meekness, servility and humbleness, he falls down, as it were, on His feet, and catches hold of them, and in this condition experiences ineffable bliss. It appears that the essence of prayers is the *sajda* or 'prostration'. The Prophet has said 'One who prostrates in prayers prostrates at the feet of God' and becomes closer to God, as the Koran says: 'Bow down in adoration and bring thyself closer to God' (Koran XCVI, 19).

The feeling has been expressed by a lover of God thus:

> Placing the head at Thy feet, what a delight!
> Saying the secrets of my heart to Thee, what a delight!

The nearness attained in prostration suggests that the unattainable has been attained. Then the devotee raises his head and saying *Allāhu Akbar* sits before his Lord. This means that he confesses that God is so great that he cannot worship Him as He ought to be worshipped, and he cannot attain His nearness as it ought to be attained. While sitting, he beseeches God to pardon his being at fault, as it was due to the misapprehension that he has attained nearness with Him. He says: 'O my Lord, pardon me and have pity on me.'

Then he bows down again in adoration, seeking still closer near-

ness, and placing his head at the feet of his real Beloved, he eulogizes and praises Him. Then he raises his head, and again sits before his Lord and offers his sincerest thanks for the favours showered upon him, and particularly for the boon of proximity and nearness (*qurb*) granted to him. With a heart full of blissful gratitude he says to himself:

> I feel proud in that Congregation of Love,
> Where a King and a beggar sit face to face.

The reason why the devotee recites the *shahāda*:

> I witness that there is no object worthy of worship except God, and
> I witness that Muḥammad is His *'abd* and Apostle

in the sitting posture is that the boon of the Proximity of God is not granted unless we believe in this witnessing formula, which affirms the principle of *Tawḥīd* or 'the Unity of God alone' and the apostleship of the Prophet. He sends blessings (*durūd*) on the Prophet because it is due to him (for the Sufi) that he has received this blessing.

Prayers have a tremendous power and significance in Sufism. As the Prophet has said:

> Prayer is the Ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the believer (to God).

And again, the Prophet says:

> In prayer alone the *'abd* comes closest to God.

He has also said,

> He who says his prayers converses with God.

Had there been no prayers how could the veil have been lifted from the face of the Beloved, and who could have led the lover to his Beloved? It has been truly said:

> Prayers alone can persuade the Beloved to unveil Himself,
> Prayers alone lift the veil from His handsome Face!
> There is no peace of mind without prayer,
> It is for Union with God what *unio mystica* is for a slaughtered bird!

The Prophet used to say that prayer was his greatest delight. When directing Bilāl to call the *adhān* (the call to prayer in Islam), he would say:

> Delight us, O Bilāl!

It is difficult to describe the state of mind of the adept engaged in prayers. How truly has Sa'dī said:

> The horizon of our vision is limited, while Thy beauty is limitless!
> Thy adorers moan over their own limitations!

Prayer is the link which connects the *'abd* with the Lord, and fills his mind with lights thereof. The subtle relation of the worshipper with the Worshipped, its secret and its high rank and dignity is seen and felt in prayers, and that is the reason why the Prophet called himself 'His *'abd*' (*'abduhu*) or 'His bondsman'. Some have even said that it is easier to become God than to become the *'abd*. This *'abdiya* is attained in prayers! Prayer is the special present to man sent from the other world by God through His Holy and Beloved Apostle in remembrance of his *mi'rāj* (the Ascension of the Prophet mentioned in the Koran). In gratitude the heart cries out:

> O God! I feel like offering myself as a sacrifice at the altar of Thy benevolence,
> My life cannot repay Thy munificence!

Thinking of the perfect prayer of the Perfect Man, Rūmī has thus admonished the careless soul:

> One *rak'a* of his is better than a thousand *rak'as*
> Of thine, O, thou useless chap!

Ḥadrat Shāh Abū Sa'īd says that while saying prayers if one observes all the prescribed modes and rules, the reality of Prayer is felt in full. For example, it is one of the rules that while standing in prayers, the gaze of the person praying should be fixed on the point where his forehead is going to be placed in prostration; in genuflexion (*rukū'*), on his feet; while prostrating, and while sitting on the knees, it should be fixed at the tip of his nose. Some persons close their eyes while standing in prayer. This is done for the composure of the mind and for concentration on God. It is true that by so doing the *laṭīfas* become active in the remembrance of God and peace of mind is felt. But it is not necessary for attaining to the higher state. Closing the eyes is an innovation (*bid'at*), but it is considered permissible for the sake of sensing the Presence of God.

Another rule is to listen to the recitation of the Koran. This helps in arousing the mystical state of saintship. The hearing of the Koran being recited correctly brings about the manifestation of the relation with higher realities.

After the Circle of the Reality of the Prayers comes the Circle of the Pure Worshipability and this is the source of all other circles.

The Contemplation of the 'Pure Worshipability' or Murāqaba-i-Ma'būdiyat-i-Ṣirfah
Here contemplation is done in the following way:

> Grace is flowing over my unitary state from the Pure Essence, the one and the only Object of Worship.

Here begins the stage of Absolute Necessity, or the stage of *tafrīd* (isolation) and *tajrīd* (detachment) of the Holy Essence. After this, no further step may be taken. In the *mi'rāj*[8] or the 'Ascension' the Prophet Muḥammad was asked to stop at this point. But by Divine Grace vision is not stopped. Steps may be weak and lame, but vision is strong and clear. An ecstatic has expressed his feelings about this stage as follows:

> Thou art like a tree tall and high!
> We, the sight seers, lack the stature to reach Thee!

The secret of the article of Creed, *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* is revealed at this stage. It becomes clear that worship of every kind is due to God in the state of abstract unity, or *ḥadrāt-i-aḥadiyyat-i-mujarrad* alone, and not even to the Divine Names and Attributes. Obviously, therefore, contingent beings are not worthy of worship. Hence, *shirk* or the joining of others in worship with God is totally excluded. The votary (*'abd*) is totally separated from the *Ma'būd* (Deity). It becomes clear that *Lā Ma'būd illā Allāh* (there is no object worthy of worship save God) is the goal suitable for the adepts, as *Lā Mawjūd illā Allāh* (None exists save God) is for those who occupy the middle position in *sulūk*, and *Lā Maqṣūd illā Allāh* (there is no purpose to life save God) is for the beginners treading the Path. The adepts take delight in supererogatory prayers called *nawāfil.*[8]

NOTES

1. Vid above, Chapter III, note 30.
2. See Swami Muktananda, *The Play of Consciousness*, 58–171 for astral projections.

3. Some other mystical traditions teach the universe being an expansion of energy or *chitti shakti*.
4. For the concept of 'surrender' or 'submission' vid above, Chapter IV, note 4.
5. These stages or *maqāmāt* vary in different Sufi Orders. Rice op. cit. 39–53, for example, mentions seven: repentance (*tawba*), fear of the Lord (*wara'*), detachment (*zuhd*), poverty (*faqr*), patience (*ṣabr*), trust or self-surrender (*tawakkul*), and contentment (*rida'*).
6. The place of the 'realized being' as the Shaykh (Persian: *Pir*; in Hinduism: *Guru*) is of tremendous importance in Sufism. He (or she) is the one who guides the disciple on his spiritual path. On the concept of the 'Perfect Man' on a higher level, vid, R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 77–161.
7. *Koran* XVII, 1. The Prophet Muḥammad is the first link in the spiritual chain of Sufism, and his ascension through the heavens into Divine Presence, to which the *Koran* refers, became the prototype of the mystic's spiritual ascension into the intimate Presence of God.
8. *Maktūbāt-i-Mujaddid* (3 volumes) et passim; *Hidāyat al-Ṭālibīn*, Shāh Abū Sa'īd, printed by the Dar al-Isha'at (Punjab), 1926; and other well-known works on the Mujaddidiyya Order of Sufism.

CHAPTER VIII

Illumination of the Spirit: Tajliya-i-Rūḥ

Friend, matchless Friend!
None else can soothe my heart!

In the terminology of the Sufis, the term *tajliya-i-Rūḥ* or the 'illumination of the Spirit' implies the filling of the human spirit with the effulgence of the Vision of God, and the fervour of His love. But before we proceed to elucidate this subject, let us first consider the problems of the nature of the Spirit.

According to the Koran, the human spirit is an *amr* or 'command of the Lord'. The Koran says:

They will ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The spirit is by command of my Lord . . . (Koran XVII, 85)

It is reported in the *ḥadīth* that the Prophet was asked whether the spirit was created by God or was it an eternal being? He replied that the spirit is a created and originated entity. As the word *amr* also signifies 'action', it may mean that the spirit is an 'act of the Lord', that is to say, it is created, and thus contingent. This is how the above verse has been interpreted by Sayyid Murtaḍa in his well-known work entitled *Durar-i-ghurar*.

The verse under consideration may also be interpreted to mean that the spirit is *mujarrad* or an 'abstract entity'. 'By my Lord's command' signifies that the spirit belongs to the *ʿālam-i-amr* or the 'world of command' and *baqā'* or 'everlastingness'; and not to the world of creation and extinction or the *ʿālam-i-khalq wa fanā*. The world of command is also the *ʿālam-i-ghayb* or the 'invisible world', as well as the *ʿālam-i-ākhira*, or the 'world of hereafter'.

The Koran also says: 'His verily is all creation and command' (Koran VII, 53).

This means that both the corporeal and the spiritual worlds belong to God. In the thinking of *some* of the Sufis, the 'world of command' is created by God, but not from matter and not in time. It was

brought into existence by God directly, by His word of command *Kun*, 'Be'; while the world of creation is fashioned from something already existing and is in time and space. Therefore, the substance of 'Say, the spirit is by my Lord's command' seems to be that the spirit belongs to the world of command, which has come into existence by the command of God and is incorporeal and non-temporal. It follows that the spirit is an abstract substance. In the terminology of the philosophers, an 'abstract substance' is defined as an entity that is neither the locus of any substance, nor does it inhere in any substance, nor is it composed of any such substances.

A great majority of the Sunni *'ulamā* deny the existence of abstract entities in this originated world. According to them, God alone is abstract and none else besides Him. Most of the Shi'a *'ulamā* also hold this same view. In our view, there is no valid argument against the existence of abstract entities. But the belief in the eternity (*qidam*) of any abstract entity is certainly false, both from reason and authority. The argument advanced to refute the abstractness of the spirit is that abstractness (*tajarrud*) is a special attribute of God, and therefore none else can partake of it. In fact, the special attributes of God are 'self-subsistence' (*wujūb-bi-dhāt*) and 'absolute eternality' (*qidam-i-muṭlaq*). Now if one believes that the abstract entity is contingent, temporal and non-eternal, there should be no objection.

Consequently, there are some Sunni *'ulamā*, like Shaykh Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, Dawwānī, Rāghib of Isfahan, and some Shi'ite *'ulamā*, like Khwāja Naṣīr ad-Dīn Ṭūsī, Shaykh Ajal Mufīd, Shaykh Ibn Bābawaihi etc., who have held that the human spirit is a substance that is free from all matter, but that it works in a material environment, and that is the reason why it is related to a body. But it is related to a body to the extent that it manages and controls it. In itself, it belongs to the invisible world, or the world of command, and not to the visible world, or the world of creation. It is neither sensuous nor rational, it is neither in the body nor outside of it, it is neither joined to the body, nor separated from it. It has the same relation to the body as God has with the cosmos.

Shaykh al-Ishrāq, Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn, in his book the *Hayākil an-Nūr*, expresses astonishment about

> how this holy entity (i.e. the spirit) has been regarded as a body! When it goes in ecstasy, it seems that it will leave the world of material bodies and soar towards an infinite world . . . Were you merely a body, or as a part of it, your ego would have changed every second and there would have been no continuity in the perceiving self.

What the Shaykh means is that the body and its parts are in constant change from their very birth and this process goes on incessantly until death, and yet the ego, or the subject, remains identical with itself. The *Ishrāqiyya* (the Illuminationists) believe that the soul is eternal and without a beginning, but this, according to the *Fuqahā* (the Muslim jurists), is blasphemy. The Sufis believe that the soul is originated or created and contingent.

According to the *Mashshā'iyya* (the Peripatetic School), when the *sperma hominis* attains the highest reach of its capability, it is endowed with the soul by the Supreme Being. This may have some affinity with what has been said in the Koran: ' . . . I have breathed into him of My spirit' (Koran XV, 29).

An attempt has been made to reconcile the points of view of the Illuminationists, the Peripatetics and the Sufis. The Supreme Being may be regarded to have the same relation with the individual souls or spirits, as for example, the cloud has with the drops of rain. If we call the cloud eternal, we will have to call the drops of rain eternal also, because the cloud is the quintessence of the drops. And the drops may also be regarded as originated (*ḥadūth*), for they assume their form when they are separated from the cloud and not before. There is no doubt that the Supreme Being is eternal, and hence the souls or the spirits are eternal in one sense, and they are originated also in another sense, as they have limited forms and are determined.

As stated above, the Sufis believe that the spirit is an abstract, non-spatial substance and has been originated before creation of the body. We have also stated, in one of the previous chapters, that the Sufis of the Naqshbandiyya Order regard the *laṭīfas* as being above the *'Arsh*. This does not mean that the spirit resides above the Divine Throne. It merely indicates that the spirit is non-spatial. As the *'Arsh* is the furthest end of all spatial bodies, and the spirit is non-spatial, it was said to be above the *'Arsh*.

The Sufis call the spirit the *rūḥ*, and the 'self' the *nafs*. Kāshi explains these terms as follows:

> The spirit (*rūḥ*), in the terminology of the Sufis, is a human *laṭīfa* and is an abstract entity; in the terminology of the philosophers, it is a fine vapour which arises in the heart. That which has the potentiality to receive life, sensibility and heat, the Sufis call the *nafs* or 'self'. The one that occupies the middle stage between the spirit and the self and which is conscious of universals and particulars is called the *qalb* or the heart. Philosophers have made no distinction between the heart and the human spirit and have called them both the rational self (*nafs-i-nāṭiqa*).

Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī has elaborated this point in his book *Ta'īfāt* thus:

> The human spirit is a human *laṭīfa* which knows and perceives and it is borne by the animal soul. It has descended from the world of command and reason is incapable of knowing its essential nature. This spirit is sometimes abstract and apart, and it sometimes enters into a body.[1]

Further, this is how he defines the 'Great Spirit' of *ar-Rūḥ al-'aẓam*:

> The Great Spirit is what is called the human spirit. It is a manifestation of the Essence of God, and an expression of His aspect of Care and Providence. That is why nobody can acquire its gnosis. It will remain an arcane secret. God alone knows the secret.[2]

Qayṣarī has said:

> The rational self (spirit) is immanent in the body in the same way as the Absolute Reality is immanent in all beings. In one sense, it is other than the body.

Imām Ghazzāli says that the human body is like a lamp, the human heart like the wick, the animal soul like fire, and the human spirit is like the light. The only difference is that the light of a lamp depends on the fire, but the human spirit does not depend on the animal soul. The human spirit is the real thing, and the animal soul depends on it. It is like a lamp lit from the lights of the unseen Domain. From this example, it may be understood that God has attributed certain things with a quality so that when the reflection of opposite things falls on them, it assumes a definite shape in them. So also, the animal soul is gifted with the attribute that when the lights of the Unseen world cast their reflections on it, it becomes luminous and assumes a new form. Now this reflection, together with that part of the animal soul on which the reflection has fallen, is called the human spirit. When this new form is established, the animal soul (which is the term for the vapours issuing from the fine humours of the human body) becomes a mount for the human spirit. The body is mortal, but as the lights of the Unseen are eternal (*abadī*), their reflection will necessarily also be eternal, hence, the human spirit is without end (*abadī*). It has a permanent, constant relation with its source. As the ray of the sun has a perpetual relation with the sun, and as also after the demolition of a house, the reflection of the sun continues, so also, after the annihilation of the body or of the animal soul, the human soul is not annihilated; it still persists and endures. It has some

connection with the external world as it contains an element of the animal soul within it. Therefore, after the extinction of the body, the human spirit survives in a similitudinary world (which is between the world of the spirit and the world of the bodies).

Sayyid Shāh 'Alī Qalandar has said:

> The spirit comes into the external world with an aptitude to acquire knowledge. If it acquires discursive knowledge alone, i.e. knowledge proceeding from argument or reason only, and not intuitive knowledge, it remains imperfect. But if by austerity and self-discipline, it purified itself so much that it acquires the knowledge of direct observation of God (*'ilm-i-shuhūdī*) it becomes perfect . . .[3]

Ghazzālī, in his epoch-making work *Iḥyā 'ulūm ad-Dīn* (The Revivification of the Religious Sciences), says as follows:

> The word 'spirit' has two meanings. According to the first meaning, it is a subtle body having its source in the vacuum of the bodily heart, from where it pervades the entire body through the arteries. Its permeation in the body, and the giving of life to the five senses is just like placing a lamp in a house from which light spreads into the four corners of the house. So also, the spirit is like a lamp, and life is like the light. The moving of the spirit and its permeation through the body is just like moving of the lamp in the house. This is what the physicians mean by the word spirit . . . and they treat the body. But the physicians of the spirit, who wish to lead the spirit to the *sanctum sanctorum*, do not accept this meaning. What they mean by the spirit (and this is the second meaning of the word spirit referred to above) is that it is a *laṭīfa-i-mudrika*, or an organ of knowledge. This is what is meant by the verse 'Say, the spirit is by my Lord's command'. We have dealt with this meaning when we elaborated on the second connotation of the word *qalb*. It is a wonderful divine entity whose quiddity reason is unable to grasp.

The second connotation of the heart as given by Ghazzālī, is as follows:

> The heart is a receptacle of God's grace and is spiritual in substance. This spiritual substance is the essence of man. It alone has perception, knowledge and gnosis. It is the heart that is admonished, reprimanded and punished. It has the same relation with the pine-shaped piece of flesh as an accident has with the body, as an attribute is related to the substance to which it is attributed, a spatial object to the space it occupies, or an instrument to the man who uses it. The reason why we do not

> propose to enquire into its essential nature is two fold: first, this is a matter pertaining to inspirational knowledge (*'ilm-i-mukāshafa*) and is an arcane secret, while in this book we are dealing with the knowledge of practical affairs. Next it will be divulging the secret of the spirit, about which the Prophet of Islam remained silent. It is better not to open our lips and remain quiet.[4]

This makes it clear that for Ghazzāli the word 'spirit' and the word 'heart' connote the same sense, and that it is not possible to comprehend them by any intellectual effort. The Sufis seem to agree that it is not possible to attain the gnosis of the essence of the spirit through discursive reason. Reason is unable to perceive abstract lights or the *anwār-i-mujarrad*. They may be perceived by spiritual unveiling, or by the Grace of God. And this is possible only when one closes the door, not only to the external senses, but also to the injunctions of the internal senses, and frees the heart from all bodily entanglements with a determined view to engage it in the apprehension of abstract spiritual matters. In this way alone, the essence of the spirit has been revealed to the Sufis and in this way alone they have gained gnosis, which they express in some such words as 'pure light and entire purity'.

By 'little knowledge' in the verse

> Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (Koran, XVII, 85),

the Sufis understand knowledge that is acquired by discursive reason. But the essence of the spirit is not disclosed by such partial reason, which is entangled in wordly relations and is involved in thoughts of mine and thine. This is why an adept has prayed:

> Help me O God! that I may subjugate my carnal self,
> And intoxicate my reason with the wine of Thy love!
> That I may become void of self to gain Thy awareness,
> That the self may 'pass away' and by thus dying live in Thee!

Mawlānā Jalālad-Dīn Rūmī has made use of two examples to illustrate what he understands to be the essence of the spirit:

> The invisible lights which emanate from the Universal Spirit are like an ocean and the individual souls are like waves. If we look at the ocean, we find that all the waves are in the ocean and that in reality they are all one. But if we look at the waves, we find that they are many in number and separate from one another.
>
> Or, the Universal Spirit, the real source of all the invisible

lights, may be conceived as the sun and the individual souls inhabiting the bodies of the individuals as the rays of the sun which penetrate through the windows in every house. Now, if we look at the sun, it is one, and if we look at the rays entering into several houses, they are multiple and separate. The gnostic knows this truth and fully understands what this unity or diversity implies. But he who is not a gnostic, and has no knowledge of reality, feels puzzled and fails to understand what reality the human spirit is.

Rūmī says:

> Difference exists only in the animal souls,
> Human souls have a common source,
> And are fundamentally one!
> Animal souls are like stray bits of inorganic clay.[5]

This is what the Sufis of the order of the Unity of Being maintain. According to them, God alone has the Absolute Ego and the Absolute Spirit. In all individuals the same spirit manifests itself according to the aptitude of the individual. The individuals are like mirrors wherein God reflects Himself.

In this way, the spirit may be conceived of as one, from one point of view, and many from another point of view. That is why it has been said that nobody can know the essence of the spirit, in other words, it is unknown and unknowable. This is because the gnosis of the Essence of God is impossible. In all individual human souls the same Universal Spirit has manifested Itself according to the aptitudes of the individual essences.

The author of the *Mutammimāt-i-Jām'al-'Uṣūl* makes a comprehensive statement on the human spirit. He says:

> The human spirit is a knowing, perceiving *laṭīfa* of man. Its mount is the animal soul. It has come down from the world of command. Reason is incapable of knowing its nature . . . The Great Spirit is the same human spirit, being a manifestation of the Essence of God, and an expression of the aspect of His Care and Providence. That is why nobody is able to acquire its gnosis. God alone has it. It is the First Intelligence (*al-'aql al-awwal*), and the Reality of Muḥammad (*al-Ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya*) and the Reality of the Names (*al-Ḥaqīqat-i-Asmā'iyya*). It is the 'First of all beings' whom God has created in His own form. It is the 'Great Vice-gerent of God' (*Khalīfa-i-akbar*). It is a spiritual substance, and in view of its substantiality, it is called self (*nafs*) and in view of its being light, it is called First Intelligence. It has many names and manifestations in the macrocosm, such as the First

> Intelligence, the Pen (*al-qalam*), the Light (*an-Nūr*), the Universal Self (*al-Nafs al-Kulliyya*), the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*). Similarly, it has many names and manifestations in the microcosm. In the terminology of the Sufis they are called *sirr, khafī, akhfā, rūḥ, qalb, kalima, rau'w, fu'ād, ṣadr, 'aql, nafs.*[6]

Now let us turn to the question of the 'illumination of the spirit' and try to understand its meaning and the manner in which it is done.

The Sufis maintain that the perfection of the spirit consists in illuminating it with the attributes of God's Providence (*rubūbiyya*) so that it may become fit to be the vice-regent of God on earth. There seems to be some difference of opinion among the Sufis as how to best illuminate the spirit. According to some of them, it is not possible to purify the self (*nafs*) without first illuminating the spirit.. But there are others who hold that this can be done by first cleansing the heart. However, according to the Kubrawiyya School of Sufism, if a person spends his entire life in purifying his self, he will not succeed and will not find time to illuminate his spirit. Most of the Sufis agree that the best method is that the evil promptings of the self (*nafs al-ammāra*) should be first subjugated and brought under control by the prohibitions of the *Sharī'a*. One should engage oneself in cleansing the heart and illuminating the spirit at the same time.

Now according to the *Ḥadīth*, which informs us that God has said,

> He who moves a foot towards Me, I advance towards him an arm-length[7]

grace in abundance begins to descend. And then, according to the promise,

> He who walks towards Me, I come to him running,[8]

the self is purified to such an extent in a short time, that even life-long austerity and self-remonstrance cannot achieve the same result, for

> A Divine pull takes one nearer to God more than the combined worship of the *jinn* and human-kind.

He who is the patron, friend and helper of the self can only purify the self, and that is why the Prophet has taught us to pray thus:

> O God, purify my self and make it righteous. Thou art the best who canst purify it. Thou art its patron and its friend.

In his well-known book *Mirṣād al-'Ibād*, Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn Dāyā

(d. 1256) has shown at great length how to illuminate the spirit by means of the love of God. In the following pages we give the gist of what he has said.

For the illumination of the spirit, it is necessary that every relationship that the spirit has formed, after entering the body, with this world through sense of perception and knowledge, should be gradually severed, for it is these relations and attachments with this world that form a veil and keep the spirit remote from God. Anything to which the spirit is attached, and in whose love it is imprisoned makes it its bondsman.

As a result of this, it loses the zest of witnessing God. But as these worldly relations are gradually severed, and the chains that bind the spirit with the ephemeral objects of the world are cut asunder, so the spirit, 'pure from self as the flame is from smoke', sets forth upon its journey to God, renouncing all but Him, showing attachment to Him alone. It occupies itself wholly with the thought of God alone, in the spirit of intense humility and restless yearning. In this state it wails:

> A breeze scented with the fragrance of my Friend
> Came and gave a new lease of life to my old and forgotten love;
> O breeze, thou hast the sweet scent of my Friend,
> I beseech thee not to blow towards any stranger.

Here two mothers nurse the baby spirit. On the one hand, it is fed by the breast of the mystic path (*Ṭarīqa)*, with the milk of the renunciation of the heart's desires and lust and passion. On the other hand, *Ḥaqīqa (Reality)* feeds it with the milk of Divine Light so much so that, filled with the spiritual illuminations of the Divine Splendour, the spirit is freed from the shackles of relations of the body and attributes of flesh and gets back to its primary pure and uncorrupted nature. It becomes competent to listen to what God has said 'Am I not thy Lord?' and to affirm in reply: 'Yea, verily' (Koran, VII, 172). When the spirit thus sheds human frailties and emerges thereof, it is free also from the bonds of whim and fancy, it then observes what happens in the *ʿālamu'l-malakūt* or 'the world of dominion' and sees in the mirrors of the external and internal worlds the signs of God.

At this stage love becomes pure and clean. Affinity grows between love and spirit, love pervades the spirit and the spirit finds in itself nothing but love. As a lover has expressed this condition in his own way:

> I pined a lot in the love of a beautiful face,
> Now, I find myself wholly enveloped in love.

So far the life of the body depended on the spirit, but from now on the life of the spirit depends on love alone. As a lover has said:

> O disciple of love, if thou seest me alive,
> Do not thou believe that life is still left in me.
> Love is keeping me alive and not the spirit,
> I have risked my life to keep my love alive.

At this stage, love takes the place of the spirit in the body and performs its functions, while the spirit, moth-like, hovers round the shining Face of its Beloved and exclaims in ecstasy:

> Thy beautiful Face is like a flame and the moth is me (ready to burn itself in its love)
> My heart has befriended Thee and is in Thy pursuit, the person left alone is me!
> Put the chain of Thy tresses which is round Thy neck
> Round my neck, for the mad man in Thy love is me!

At this stage, abundant Divine favours welcome the spirit and fill its being with ecstasy and loving converse with the Beloved begins. The spirit is also reprimanded thus:

> If thou desirest to advance in My direction,
> Think not what the world thinks of thee.
> Thou canst win My love, if thou art ready
> To burn thy self into its flame.

When the intoxicating wine of

> We shall charge thee with a word of weight (Koran, LXXIII, 5)

goes down the throat in large measures and begins to make itself felt, the very being of the spirit is set at naught! This mystic state of effacement is expressed by an ecstatic in symbolic language thus:

> It was reported yesterday that an old man entered a bar,
> And with tears in his eyes started hobnobbing with his wine glass,
> The wine turned into honey and the bar into a place of worship,
> O God! what miraculous powers the visitor had!

The spirit is kept for a while in a place which lies between the heaven of Divine Attributes and the hell of worldly existence, and by administering the wine of direct observation of the Beloved, the remaining existential attributes are naughted. This is how the Sufis interpret the following verse of the Koran:

> And We remove whatever rancour may be in their hearts (Koran, VII, 43).

And then, as indicated on the verse

> (God) had made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure (both) seen and unseen (Koran, XX| 20),

the spirit is loaded with divine favours both without and within, and it exclaims involuntarily:

> Oh God, I sacrifice myself in gratitude for Thy boon!
> What a boon! My sacrifice is hardly a recompense.

But at this stage, if the spirit, pleased with these bounties and favours, becomes forgetful of the Bestower thereof and 'turns on its heels', it is lost. And if it sticks to the path of servitude, and if its eyes do not swerve or go wrong, it sees the greater revelations of its Lord.

This is of course a very perilous stage. Many sincere lovers have slipped here. They fell down and were lost for ever. And many true travellers on the Path to God, when they were gifted with thaumaturgic powers (*karāmāt*), they felt proud of their occult and mysterious powers,[9] turned away from the path of love for God and fixed their gaze on the flattery of the ephemeral creatures and this fleeting world. Thus, they lost the taste for direct observation of God and fell into the deepest depths of degradation. How well a true lover has admonished these folk in an indirect way:

> O Thou, the *qibla* of all those who enter Thy lane,
> All good souls hanker after Thee!
> He who turns his eyes away from Thee today,
> How will he be able to see Thee tomorrow?

But those who are eternally 'blessed' and about whom it has been said in the Koran

> Lo! those unto whom kindness hath gone forth before them from Us, they will be far removed from thence (Koran, XXI, 101),

they keep their eyes on the Bestower of the blessings, not on the blessings themselves, and know that thanksgiving means remembering the Bestower of the blessings. And they, in accordance with the proclamation of the Lord:

> If ye give thanks, I will give you more (Koran, XIV, 7),

they become entitled to receive many more blessings and favours. An ecstatic has depicted their mental condition thus:

Never shall my heart abandon Thy thought,
Or think of befriending another.
If it gives up Thine love whom shall it love?
And if it leaves Thy lane where will it go?

At this stage, it is the bounden duty of the spirit to seek *One*, say *One*, know *One*, and desire *One*, to know nothing else other than its Beloved. It should divorce and eschew the two worlds, it should not look at the lofty positions of this world, nor at the comforts of Heaven. It should lay its head on the threshold of its Beloved and say in the words of Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn Kubrā:

As long as we enjoy royal patronage,
The entire universe is at our beck and call.
Heaven itself is just a land-mark on the road to our destination,
As our goal is further away from the universe.

If a thousand arcane secrets revealed to the prophets are disclosed to the spirit, it should pay no attention to them, if it is addressed a thousand times, 'what is it that you would like to have?' it should only say, 'an *'abd* (bondsman) has no desire, the presence of desire indicates that he still exists, but this bondsman has negated his self'. This part of the path is not traversed soon. If the Beloved pays no attention to you for a long time, do not lose patience, do not turn your thoughts from Him. Here, even the prophets and saints feel bewildered. Human steps alone, unaided by divine grace, cannot travel over this path. This is the stage of the Beloved's *nāz* (coquetry) and the lover's *niyāz* (constancy). To attain it, the spirit is stripped of all relations, becomes humble and humiliated, and fights for the prize with its life.

After this, when the spirit smells the scent of divine favours, like Jacob it raises the cry:

> I do indeed scent the presence of Joseph. Nay, think me not a dotard. (Koran, XII, 94).

Or as a lover has exclaimed in his yearning for the Beloved:

When the Beloved with Joseph-like beauty strolls in the parterre,
A scent from Zulaikha comes to me.
Like Jacob my heart wails:
I can smell the apparel of Joseph.

Now the spirit feels the yearning for the Beloved and the pang of His love so much that he gets tired of his existence, and may wail like Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj:

Kill me, my good friends, surely in my death is my life,
My life is in my death and my death is in my life.[10]

During this period, when the spirit is not allowed to enter the Sanctum and is left pining for its Beloved, and having to bear the pang of separation, it is filled with pain and anguish, then patience and reason leave it, and it wails:

All devices to attain my goal I have tried,
Now the stage of lunacy is reached.

In this state of distraction, supplication and humiliation, it dawns upon the spirit that the 'quest is a failure, the road is blocked, and restlessness is necessary'. It bewails its misfortune and exclaims:

Due to separation from Thee my heart was bleeding last night,
Till dawn the Pleiades alone sympathised with me, last night,
Till early morning my only cry was:
Harken, my God, Thou who listens to all!

Or in humility, helplessness and distraction, it cries out:

Everyone in this world has someone to look after him, I have none but Thee, Thee and Thee alone.

Then, as is stated in the Koran:

Who listens to the soul distressed when it calls on Him and who relieves its suffering? (Koran, XXVII, 62).

Then the veils are lifted, the spirit of the distressed lover is loaded with divine favours and bounties flow to it in exceeding measure. It hears a voice calling it to rise:

The house is well decorated to receive thee,
All curtains have been raised in anticipation of thine advent.

When the Illumination of the Divine Essence is revealed, like a moth, the spirit flings itself onto it and vanishes in its radiance; it loses the consciousness of its individuality and a Divine Substance with Divine Attributes is substituted. In this *hāl* or mystic state, an ecstatic has exclaimed:

In Thy love, the sense of pain and pleasure all are lost,
On meeting Thee my pangs of separation are over.
A ray of light of Thy revelation has obliterated,
All distinctions between more or less, good or evil.

Abiding in this Divine Illumination the spirit feels peace. The Koran says:

> As for such He hath written faith upon their hearts and hath strengthened them with a spirit from Him (Koran, LVIII, 22).

If the entire life time is spent in attaining this goal, a new life is given instead, which will never be lost. A gnostic of this rank has said:

> When the spark of love was ignited, my life was surrendered to the Beloved,
> It was the Beloved who restored life to me from His own life.

This is the threshold of *fanā* or annihilation and the beginning of a life everlasting. Thereafter, the spirit is trained by the Illumination of Divine Attributes. Every moment of this life equals the combined worship of the *jinn* and humankind!

As stated above, this is the gist of what the great saint Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn Dāyā has taught in his book, the *Mirṣād al-'Ibād* on the subject of the illumination of the spirit and the love of God.

Now we shall proceed to give a detailed description of the various stages which the spirit has to pass in its loving journey to God. The works of Mawlānā Jalālad-Dīn Rūmī (The *Mathnavī*) are epoch-making on this subject. The cry of love that Rūmī has raised in this world is without parallel in the world of Sufism.

First we have to consider the problem of the quiddity or nature of love.

God had attributed Himself with love. A *Ḥadīth* says:

> I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known. So I created the world in order to be known. I dealt with them lovingly, so they came to know Me.

The Koran also speaks about those righteous elects who have cut asunder the chains of limitations, and cast aside the veils of relations, and have made their hearts a mirror for the illuminations of the Unseen:

> Soon will God produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him. (Koran, V, 57).

There is no doubt that the love that God has for the expression of His own perfections is personal and it proceeds from the love of His own Essence, and this love is the basis of His attributive love and is the root cause of the manifestation of all beings. The love of His own Essence is due to the perception of His own Essence and His per-

fections. But it should be noted that because of this love there is no addition to the state of Abstract Unity or *Aḥadiyya*. This last mentioned state is the state of dropping of all modes, adjuncts, relations and aspects. It is the state of Pure Essence, in which there is no name, no quality, no relation, no adjunct or anything else and hence, we cannot speak of love, or regard it as something different from the Pure Essence or external to it. The love that God has for His own Essence will, therefore, remain unknown and unknowable. The quest to acquire its gnosis is of no avail. Reference is made to this in the Koran:

> Allah biddeth you beware of Him (Koran, III, 30).

And the Prophet has warned the thinkers:

> Do not indulge in speculating on the Nature of God, speculate on the Attributes of God (manifested in nature).

It is with regard to this love that it has been said:

> Love surpasses human ambitions,
> It can neither be duly commended nor grasped.
> When a thing is beyond the realm of thought
> It can neither be conceived nor comprehended.

Rūmī has also understood love in the sense of the Love of God for His own Essence. He says:

> Whatsoever I say in exposition and explanation of love,
> When I come to Love (itself) I am ashamed of that (explanation),
> Although the commentary of tongue makes (all) clear,
> Yet tongueless love is clearer.
> Whilst the pen was making haste in writing,
> It split open itself as soon as it came to love.
> In expounding it (love) the intellect lay down (helplessly) like an ass in the mire;
> It was love (alone) that uttered the explanation of love and loverhood,
> If thou require the proof, do not avert they face from Him.[11]

Now we consider the nature of love (quiddity) in the state of *wāḥidiyya*, or the second Epiphany, or the reality of Humanity, the Holy Breath. When the gnostic contemplates the Essence of God in the sense that it possesses knowledge in all its details covering Its Names, Attributes and Ideas, together with all their aspects, their interrelations and mutual distinctions, this plane is termed

wāḥidiyya. This is the plane of the Names and Attributes. Here, love is differentiated from the Essence and Its Names and Attributes as every attribute is differentiated from the reality attributed to it and from other attributes also. The reality of this love is expressed in the plane of God's knowledge and its manifestations realised in the external world. But the nature of love in the plane of *wāḥidiyya*, and also in the external world is revealed to those only who have tasted the wine of love and are intoxicated with it, though it may be the love for the Absolute Beauty or the love for any corporeal or spiritual manifestation of It. Just as it is difficult to describe the joy derived from music to one who has never felt it, so it is impossible to explain love to one who has not experienced it.

An Arab gnostic has said:

> He who is not struck by love cannot realise it,
> While he who has experienced it, cannot explain it.
> To describe the sun before a blind man is folly,
> So is an attempt to describe beauty before one who lacks the taste to appreciate it.

The same idea is expressed by another lover also in this way:

> He who does not love the Beloved as I do,
> Cannot understand what love connotes.
> Mere description of shapes and forms,
> Do not impress a blind person.

What is perceived by intuition cannot be described by mere conceptions. Love is a matter of intuition or taste. It can neither be expounded, nor can the mere idea of love apprise us of the reality of love. Is it possible to feel hot by the mere thought of fire? Is one's thirst quenched by thinking of water? This idea is beautifully expressed in the following couplets:

> Thinking of fire does not make thee hot,
> Thinking of thirst does not quench thy thirst,
> Fragrance of scented stuff,
> Does not reach one merely by thinking of it.
> He who has not tasted wine,
> Cannot be intoxicated by talking about it.

The lover alone knows what love is. It is an arcane secret which cannot be disclosed. 'Love is a treasure to be concealed. Where the treasure lies cannot be revealed.' As a lover has said:

Even if I suffer suffocation, I cannot divulge this secret,
Suppress it, suppress it, lest the entire universe might catch fire.

Thousands of sages passed away but they were not aware of love. The charm of love was merely a legend for them.

The heart alone knows what the substance of love is,
The eye of reason has no power to behold it.

The moth alone knows the sweetness in the smoke of the burning taper and only a madman is aware of the pleasure found in the clanks of the chain:

Thou art the darling of the world and hast been tenderly reared,
Thou art unaware of our inward fervour and constancy.
O pretty one, when thou hast not loved any beloved,
How canst thou know the plight of the helpless lovers?
We have to learn from the lover himself what is love and what is beloved!
What is called love is nothing but grief and ignition,
The Beloved is another word for pain and frustration.
Let him who does not value his life
Face the call to the slaughter house.

One lover has exclaimed:

But love alone has whispered this secret into my ear, that we are just a reed and love the one who plays on the reed.

But this very soreness of love is the salve for the heart of the poor lover and this very pang of love is a source of comfort for him:

What the world knows as love is veritable anguish,
But it is an anguish without which there is no peace.

Rūmī has thus eulogised love:

Hail, O Love that is our best bargain,
Thou that art the physician of all our ills,
The remedy of our pride and vainglory,
Our Plato and our Galen!
Through love the earthly body soared to the skies,
The mountain began to dance and became nimble.
Love inspired Mount Sinai, O Lover,
(So that) Sinai (was made) drunken and Moses fell in a swoon.[12]

According to Rūmī, the 'sickness of love' is preferable to health and healing. He says,

It is the very soul of health. Its pains are the envy of every pleasure.[13]

> The melting (wasting) away of lovers is (the cause of their spiritual) growth:
> Like the moon, he (the lover) hath a fresh (shining) face whilst he is melting away.
> All the sick hope to be cured,
> But this sick one sobs, crying, 'Increase my sickness,
> I have found no drink sweeter than this poison!'
> No state of health can be sweeter than this disease,
> No act of piety can be better than this sin!
> Years in comparison with this moment are (but) an hour.[14]

Reason cannot understand this state of affairs. It denies love, but the lovers regard reason as ignorant. Rūmī says:

> Partial (discursive) reason is a denier of love,
> Though it may give out it is a confidant.
> It is clever and knowing, but it is naught (devoid of self-existence)
> Until the angel has become naught, he is an Ahriman (devil).
> It is our friend in word and deed,
> But when you come to the case of inward feeling (ecstasy), it is naught (of no account).[15]

And again Rūmī says:

> He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries),
> Knows that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam,
> Intelligence is (like) swimming in the seas!
> He (the swimmer) is not saved, he is drowned at the end of the business.
> Leave off swimming, let pride and enmity go:
> This is not a *Jayhūn* (Oxus), or a lesser river, it is the ocean,
> And moreover, (it is) the deep ocean without refuge:
> It sweeps away the seven seas like straw.
> Love is as a ship for the elect;
> Seldom is calamity (the result); for the most part it is deliverance.
> Sell intelligence and buy bewilderment:
> Intelligence is opinion: while bewilderment is (immediate) vision.
> Sacrifice your understanding in the presence of Mustafa (Muḥammad),
> Say, *ḥasbī Allah*[16]—for God sufficeth me.[17]

Whereas reason busies itself in argumentation, love burns itself in the

resplendent light of the beloved's beauty. Reason ties itself with the six dimensions of this phenomenal world, enchained in earth and water, while love, in the proximity of the beloved, annihilates itself in the flame which flares upon the face of the beloved. Love has nothing to do with crown and sceptre, it craves for gallows and gibbets. As a lover has said:

> My heart feels bored at the coast of security and comfort,
> And yearns for the tidal waves and the company of crocodiles!

Though the comprehension of the nature of love is beyond intelligence, we find signs and effects of love in plenty. We may here note a few of them. It is said that each person has a goal towards which he turns. This goal may be a material one or a spiritual one. The Koran also indicates:

> To each is a goal to which he turns (Koran II, 148).

But it is love alone that negates and abolishes all goals, it turns the face of the lover away from everything save the beloved, it destroys his pride and egotism. It closes his eyes from all save his beloved, and clears his heart from all save his beloved. The lover exclaims:

> My jealousy demands that I should not look at any one other than Thee,
> I wish to set ablaze with the fire of his love every other thought.

The beloved alone is his *ultima thule*. As a lover has said:

> I negate all thoughts other than yours,
> If they cross my mind even accidently.
>
> For thou alone art the goal of my heart,
> My highest ambition and noblest ideal!

Rūmī says this in a beautiful way:

> Love hath estrangement with the two worlds:
> In it are two-and-seventy madnesses.
> Its religion is other than (that of) the two and seventy sects
> Beside it the throne of the king is (but) a splint-bandage.
> At the time of the *samā'*, Love's minstrel strikes up this (strain):
> 'Servitude is chains and lordship is headache'
> Then what is love? The sea of Not-being:
> There the foot of the intellect is shattered.[18]
>
> 'Why is love murderous from the first
> So that he who is an outsider runs away?'[19]

The only muzzle for evil suggestions (of doubt) is love:
Else when has anyone (ever) stopped (such) temptation?[20]

The only desire of the lover now is the beloved. He does not even care to glance at the treasures of both the worlds. Especially when the love is for the Essence of God, the lover becomes blind to all else and cries out:

Even if a thousand arrows are aimed at my eyes,
It is impossible that I should close them and thus deny myself a glimpse of Thy Face.

The lover shuts his eyes on all others and fixes his gaze on the face of his beloved alone. He is not even conscious of the existence of any other being. The flames of love surround him on all sides and annihilate his very being. Rūmī says:

Oh, the life of lovers consists in death;
Thou wilt not win the Beloved's heart except in loosing thine own,
We gained the price and the blood-price,
We hastened to gamble our soul away.
Be drowned deep in a love,
As therein are drowned the loves of the first and the last people.[21]

And again he says:

The time is come for me to strip,
To quit the (bodily) form and become wholly spirit
How should His (the Beloved's) heart be made happy till I burn?
Oh, my heart is His home and dwelling place.
If thou wilt burn Thy house, burn it!
Who is he that will say, 'This is not allowed'
Burn this house well (and thoroughly), O furious Lion!
Thy lover's house is better so.
Henceforth, I will make this burning my *qibla* (aim),
For I am like the candle; I am (made) bright by burning.[22]

In fact, the isolation of the lover from all else save the Beloved, the annihilation of his desires and wants, and the effacement of all knowledge and reasoning is the result of the extinction of his being and the naughting of his very existence. As Rūmī says:

There is no way (admittance) for any one,
Till he becomes naughted, into the audience chamber of (Divine) Majesty.
What is the means of ascension to Heaven? This not-being.
Not-being is the creed and the religion of lovers (of God).[23]

Rūmī relates the story of Majnūn and his she-camel to make this point clear. Majnūn, riding on the she-camel, started in the search of Layla. But her foal was left behind. Whenever she saw her toggle slack, she would at once perceive that Majnūn had become heedless and dazed, and would turn her face back to go in search of the foal without delay. When Majnūn came to himself again, he would see that she had gone back many miles. Majnūn kept on going to and fro for two to three days in this condition. At last Majnūn got off her back and said to her: 'O camel, since we both are lovers, we are incompatible fellow-travellers. It behoves me to choose parting from thy companionship.' Rūmī remarks: 'These two fellow-travellers — reason and flesh — are brigands waylaying each other; lost is the spirit that does not dismount from the body'.

> The spirit because of separation from the highest heaven, is in a great want;
> The body, on account of passion for the thorn-shrub (of sensual pleasure) is like a she-camel.
> The spirit unfolds its wing to fly upwards;
> The body has stuck its claws in the earth.
> 'So long as thou art with me, O thou, who art mortally enamoured of thy home,
> Then my spirit will remain far from Layla.'[24]

When Majnūn flung himself violently to the ground from the camel's back, his leg broke. He tied up his leg and said, 'I will become a ball, I will go rolling along in the curve of Layla's bat'. Here Rūmī remarks:

> How should love for the Lord be inferior to the love for Layla?
> To become a ball for His sake is more worthy.[25]

> Become a ball, turn on the side which is sincerity,
> And go on rolling and rolling in the curve of the bat of love.[26]

> Know that the way of (spiritual) pleasure is from within, not from without,
> Know that it is folly to seek palaces and castles,
> One man is enraptured and delighted in the nook of a mosque,
> While another is morose and disappointed in a garden.
> The treasure lies in the ruin, O my prince,
> Don't you see that at the wine feast
> The drunkard becomes happy only when he becomes ruined (senseless)?
> Although the (bodily) house is full of pictures, demolish it:
> Seek the treasure, and with the treasure put it (the house) into good repair.[27]

Rūmī explains why this body is a hindrance in the way of Union with God:

'Tis a house filled with pictures of imagination and fancy,
And those forms (ideas) are as a Veil over the treasure of Union (with God)
'Tis the radiance of the treasure and the splendour (of the spiritual gold)
That cause the forms (ideas) to surge up in this breast.
'Tis from the purity and (ceaseless) agitation of the precious spirit,
'Tis from the purity and translucence of the noble water,
That the particles of foam have veiled the face of the water
That the bodily figure has veiled the face of the spirit.
Hearken then, to the adage that issued from the mouths (of men)
'This which befalls us, O brother, is due to our doings'
Because of this veil, these thirsty ones who are (so) fond of the foam,
Have got out of reach of the pure Water.
O (Divine) Sun, not withstanding (that we have) a *qibla* (object of adoration) and *Imām* like Thee,
We worship the night and behave in the manner of bats.
Make these bats to fly towards Thee,
And redeem them from this bat-like disposition,
O Thou whose protection is implored.[28]

This means that in love the real task of the lover is to efface and annihilate his separate being, and this annihilation and extinction is the key to real existence. Rūmī illustrates this through a story of a lover who is recounting to his beloved his sacrifices and loyal services and what the beloved told him:

A certain lover in the presence of his beloved
Was recounting for his services and works.
Saying, 'for thy sake I did such and such,
In this war I suffered (wounds from) arrows and spears.
Wealth is gone and strength is gone and fame is gone,
On account of my love for thee many a misfortune has befallen me.
No dawn found me asleep or laughing;
No eve found me with capital and means.'
What he had tasted of bitters and dregs,
He was recounting to her in detail, point by point,
Not for the sake of obliging her,
But for displaying hundreds of testimonies of the trueness of his love.
For man of reason a single indication is enough,

But how should the thirst (longing) of lovers be removed thereby?
The beloved said, 'Thou hast done all this, yet
Open thine ear and apprehend well.
For thou hast not done what is the root of the root of the root of love and fealty;
This that thou has done is only the branches'.
The lover said to her, 'Tell me what is that root?'
She said, 'The root thereof is to die and be naught.
Thou hast done all else, but thou hast not died, thou art living.
Hark, die, if thou art a self-sacrificing friend!'
Instantly he laid himself at full length and gave up the ghost;
Like the rose, he played away his head (life) laughing and rejoicing.
That laughing remained with him as an endowment unto everlasting,
Like the troubled spirit and reason of the gnostic.[29]

And concerning the essential purity of the inner being, Rūmī says:

How should the light of the moon ever become defiled?
Though its light strikes on every thing good and evil.
Pure of all (defilements) it returns to the moon.
Even as the light of the spirit and reason returns unto God.
The quality of purity is an endowment settled on the light of the moon,
Though its radiance falls on defilements,
Impurity does not accrue to the light of the moon,
From those defilements or pollutions.
The light of the sun heard the call 'Return'!
And came back in haste to its source.
No disgrace remained with it from the ashpits,
No colour remained with it from the rose-gardens.
The light of the eye and the seer of the light returned to their source,
The desert and plain were left in passionate desire thereof.[30]

The effacement of the being of the lover in the Being of the Beloved, or in the terminology of the Sufis *ittiḥād* (unity) of the lover with the Beloved, and his being coloured in one and the same

Colour of Allāh and who is better than Allāh at colouring? (Koran II, 138)

and other such terms should not incline us to hold that the Sufis use them in their literal or primary sense. According to the *Sharī'a*, *ittiḥād* or 'oneness with God', if understood in the literal sense, is sheer unbelief and blasphemy, for the lover and the Beloved are

opposed to each other in form. One is contingent, limited and determined, and the other is Infinite, Necessary and Absolute. And in *ḥaqīqa* (sphere of truth) oneness or identity with God is worse than unbelief or blasphemy. For those who look behind the veil, other than God does not exist. God is the only Being, and none exists besides Him. While *ittiḥād* implies the existence of two separate beings and then the coming together of these two beings. But for the *ahl-i-Ḥaqīqa* or 'people of Truth',

> What is there in the two worlds except the Single Essence,
> Nothing exists in the entire universe except He! (Jāmī)

Jāmī also rather boldly declares:

> Rase the words 'this' and 'that', duality
> denotes estrangement and repugnancy;
> In all this fair and faultless universe,
> Naught but one Substance and one Essence see.

In the terminology of the Sufis what is meant by *ittiḥād* is the state of the lover in which he is absorbed completely in the contemplation of his beloved, and in that state he does not behold anybody except his beloved (*ḥālat-i-istighrāq*). This is the highest reach of love's journey. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj expressed this state in the following words:

> I am He whom I love and He whom I love is I.

The same idea is expressed in this quatrain:

> The clearness of the wine and the transparency of the goblet,
> Have merged one into another.
> It is now, as it were, all goblet and no wine,
> Or, the other way, all wine and no goblet.

It is clear that all the eminent Sufis agree that the connotation of *ittiḥād* is not what the heretics and those who have deviated through unbelief have taken it to mean. The true sense is that in the mirror (of the heart) nothing but the beauty of the Beloved (God) is observed. Rūmī expresses the idea thus:

> I am plunged in the Light like the sun;
> I cannot distinguish myself from the light.[31]

And again:

> The reflexions that are seeking the Light,
> Are naughted when His light appears.
> Before His Face existent and non-existent perish:

Existence in non-existence is in sooth a marvellous thing!
In this place of presence all minds are lost beyond control;
When the pen reaches this point, it breaks.[32]

To explain this mystic state further, Rūmī relates the story of Majnūn:

From grief of a long separation (from Layla)
There came suddenly a sickness into the body of Majnūn,
Heated by the flame of longing his blood boiled up,
So that (the symptoms of) quinsy appeared in that mad (lover).
Thereupon the physician came to treat him,
And said, 'There is no resource but to bleed him.
Bleeding is necessary in order to remove the blood.'
So a skilled physician came thither.
And bandaged his arm and took the lancet (to perform the operation);
But straight away that passionate lover cried out,
'Take thy fee and leave the bleeding!
If I die, let my old body go (to the grave)'.
'Why,' said he, 'wherefore art thou afraid of this
When thou hast no fear of the lion of the jungle?'
Majnūn said, 'I do not fear the lancet;
My endurance is greater than the mountain formed of rock.
I am a vagabond, my body is not at ease without blows;
I am a lover, I am always in close touch with blows.
But my whole being is full of Layla;
This shell is filled with the qualities of that Pearl!
I am afraid, O cupper, lest if you let my blood
You suddenly inflict a wound with your lancet upon Layla
The man of reason whose heart is enlightened knows
That between Layla and me there is no difference.'[33]

Yet in another anecdote, Rūmī says:

A beloved asked her lover, 'Do you love yourself more or me?' He replied, 'I am dead to myself and living by thee; I have become non-existent to myself and my own attributes and existent through thee; I have forgotten my own knowledge and am knowing through thy knowledge; I have lost all thought of my own power and have become powerful through thy power. If I love myself, I must have loved thee, and if I love thee, I must have loved myself.

Whoever possesses the mirror of faith,
Sees God even though he sees himself.

In a *Ḥadīth Qudsī*, God says to a gnostic who is nigh to God with *qurb-i-farāiḍ* or 'proximity of obligations':

> Go forth with My attributes to My Creatures; whoso shall see thee shall see Me and whoso shall betake himself unto thee shall betake himself unto Me, and whoso loveth thee shall love Me.

Rūmī discloses the same mysteries to us: when a beloved asked her lover if he loved her or himself more, he replied:

> He replied, 'I have become so naughted in thee
> That I am full of thee from head to foot,
> Of my existence there is nothing left in me but the name,
> In my being there is naught but thee, O thou whose wishes are gratified,
> By that means I have become thus naughted,
> Like vinegar, in thee who art an ocean of honey'.
> As the stone that is entirely turned into pure ruby;
> It is filled with the qualities of the sun,
> That stony nature does not remain in it
> Back and front, it is filled with sunniness.
> Afterwards, if it love itself,
> That (self-love) is love of the sun, O youth;
> And if it love the sun with all its soul,
> 'Tis undoubtedly love of itself.
> Whether the pure ruby loves itself
> Or whether it loves the sun,
> There is really no difference in these two loves;
> In both cases it is naught but the radiance of the sunrise
> Until it (the stone) has become a ruby, it is enemy to itself,
> Because it is not a single 'I': two 'Is' are there;
> For the stone is dark and blind to the day(-light):
> The dark is essentially opposed to light.
> (If) it love itself, it is an infidel,
> Because it offers intense resistance to the supreme Sun.
> Therefore 'tis not fitting that the stone should say 'I',
> For, it is wholly darkness and in (the state of) death.
> Pharoah said, 'I am God' and was laid low;
> Manṣūr (Ḥallāj) said 'I am God' and was saved.
> The former 'I' is followed by God's curse,
> And the latter 'I' by God's mercy, O loving man;
> For that one (Pharoah) was a black stone, this one (Ḥallāj) a cornelian.
> That one was an enemy to the Light, and this one passion passionately enamoured (of it).
> This 'I', O presumptuous meddler, was 'He' (God), in the inmost consciousness
> Through oneness with the Light, not through (belief in)
> Strive that thy stony nature may be diminished,

So that thy stone may become resplendent with the qualities of the ruby.
Show fortitude in enduring self mortification and affliction
Continually behold everlasting life in dying to self.
Then they stoniness will become less every moment,
The nature of the ruby will become strengthened in thee,
The qualities of self-existence will depart from the body
The qualities of intoxication (ecstasy) will increase in thy head.[34]

In the above passage in Rūmī, the transformation of base nature through total love is self eloquent. The Koran also hints at the difference between the purified being and the impure being:

> Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life, and a light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness from which he can never come out? (Koran VI, 122).

Listen to what the lovers who have attained *baqā* after *fanā*, immortality after perishability, life after life's loss, eternal existence after extinction, say in a state of intoxication:

Divine light has quickened us to life,
Though we are different yet we have close affinities,
The moon will drop its self-esteem,
If we disclose our face to it.
The sun will shed its glory,
If we display ourselves in all our prowess.
The human skeleton conceals something unique,
Which attracts prostration and obeisance.
Look at Life and not body,
So that thine might be absorbed out of love.
Satan had a fearful squint,
He thought that we were something separate from God!

These lovers have attained Reality! They behold God with their inward eye, undeterred and uninfluenced by any aspect of the surrounding phenomenal world. Every moment of their life they feel powerfully drawn to Him whose Presence they feel eternally, and they feel ecstatic with the joy it brings, and in the end they merge totally in Him, saying:

When my existence is due to Thine
Then Thou alone existest,
What existence to I desire?

About these lovers of God, the Prophet Muḥammad has said:

> Verily, God Most High hath a wine that He hath prepared for His

> friends; when they drink it they are purified, and when they are purified they become nimble, and when they become nimble they soar, and when they soar they reach, and when they reach they unite, and when they unite they separate, and when they separate they pass away, and when they pass away they abide, and when they abide they become kings, then they are in 'an Assembly of Truth in the Presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent'.

Such is the high status that the human spirit is capable of in its love for God, and this has been called the 'Illumination of the Spirit' by the Sufis.

NOTES

1. *Al-Ta'rīfāt*, Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī, Hamidiyya Press, Cairo, 1321 A.H. p. 77.
2. ibid.
3. *Al-Qaul al-Muwajjah fi Tahqiq-i man 'arafa Nafsahu faqad 'arafa Rabbahu*, Sayyid Shāh 'Ali Qalandar, Asah al-Matabe, Asi Press, Lucknow, 1330 A.H., p. 181–2.
4. *Madhāq al-'Ārifīn*, translation into Urdu or Ghazālī's *Ihyā 'ulūm ad-Dīn*, vol III, Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, p. 304.
5. Quoted from *al-Qaul al-muwajjah*, p. 188–9.
6. ibid. p. 189.
7. Bukhārī.
8. Bukhārī. Cf. the Koran, II, 186: And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright.
9. These are called *siddhis* in Hindu or Yoga mysticism. In the Yoga tradition too, misuse or abuse of these powers can occur. Sufi shaykhs advise that one should not concentrate on these, but rather keep one's attention fixed on the ultimate goal, which is Reality.
10. These are the words with which Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj begins one of his most touching hymns; he had often urged the people of Baghdad to kill him so that he might be united with God. The Arabic words: *Uqtulūnī yā thiqātī—inna fī qatlī ḥayātī* . . . have been repeated by mystics throughout the ages as a basis for their meditations.
11. R. A. Nicholson, ed. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, London, 1972, vol. II, 10 (112–116).
12. ibid. vol. II, 6 (23–5).
13. ibid. vol. VI, 512 (4594).
14. ibid. vol. VI, 512 (4597–4600).

15. ibid. vol. II, 107–8 (1982–4).
16. 'God is sufficient for me', a formula that is often to be heard in the mouth of the Muslim.
17. R. A. Nicholson, ed. *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*, vol. IV 340–50 (1402–8).
18. ibid. vol. IV, 263 (4719–23).
19. ibid. vol. IV, 265 (4751).
20. ibid. vol. VI, 194 (3230).
21. ibid. vol. II, 96 (1751, 1750, 1757).
22. ibid. vol. VI, 291 (613–20).
23. ibid. vol. VI, 270 (232–4).
24. ibid. vol. IV, 358 (1545–7).
25. ibid. vol. IV, 358 (1557).
26. ibid. vol. IV, 358 (1558).
27. ibid. vol. VI, 447 (3420–4).
28. ibid. vol. VI, 447 (3425–31).
29. ibid. vol. VI, 76–7 (1242–57).
30. ibid. vol. VI, 77 (1258–64).
31. ibid. vol. IV, 134 (2408).
32. ibid. vol. IV, 260 (4660–3).
33. ibid. vol. VI, 120–1 (1999–2019).
34. ibid. vol. VI, 121–2 (2022–42).

Select Bibliography

Abdel Kader, A. H. *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd.* Gibb Memorial Series, n.s. 22 London, 1962.

'Abdul Qādir al-Jilani. *Futuh al-ghayb.* Translated by M. Aftab ud-Din Ahmad, Lahore, n.d.

Abun Nasr, Jamil M. *The Tijaniya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World.* Oxford, 1965.

Ahmad, Aziz. *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment.* Oxford, 1964.

Anawati, G. C., and Gardet, Louis. *Mystique musulmane*, Paris, 1961.

Arberry, A. J. *An Introduction to the History of Sufism.* London, 1942.

— —, *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fāriḍ.* Dublin, 1956.

——, trans. *Discourses of Rumi*, London, 1961.

— —, *The Doctrine of the Sufis.* Cambridge, 1935. Translation of Kalābādhī's *Kitab at-ta'arruf.*

——, *More Tales from the Mathnawi*, London, 1963.

——, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, London, 1964. Excerpts from 'Attar's *Tadhkirat al-auliyā.*

——, *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, Chicago, 1968.

——, *The Rubā'iyāt of Jalāluddīn Rūmī.* London, 1959.

——, *A Sufi Martyr.* London 1969. Translation of 'Ayun'l-Qudat's Apology.

——, *Tales from the Mathnawi*, London, 1961.

Ardalan, Nader, and Laleh Bakhtiar. *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture.* Chicago, 1973.

Arnold, Sir Edwin. *Pearls of the Faith*, or *Islam's Rosary.* London, 1882.

Arnold, Sir Thomas. 'Saints, Muhammadan, India'. *In Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, vol. 11, pp. 68–73. 1908–27.

'Attar, Fariduddin. *The Conference of the Birds.* Translated by C. S. Nott, 1954. Paperback. Berkeley, 1971.

Attas, Syed Muhammad Naguib al-. *The Mysticism of Hamza al-Fansuri*. Kuala Lampur, 1970.

Baljon, J. M. S. trans. *A Mystical Interpretation of Prophetic Tales by an Indian Muslim: Shah Vali Allah's 'ta'wīl al-ahādīth'*. Leiden, 1973.

Begg, Mirza Wahiduddin. *The Holy Biography of Hazrat Khwaja Muinaddin Chishti*. Ajmer, 1960.

Birge, John K. *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*. 1937. Reprint. London, 1965.

Brown, John P. *The Dervishes*. 1868. Reprint. London, 1968.

Burckhardt, Titus. *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*. Lahore, 1959.

Chelkowski, Peter, ed. *Biruni/Rumi, the Scholar and the Saint*. New York, 1975.

Corbin, Henri. *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, New York & London, 1960.

——, *Histoire de la philosophie Islamique*. Idees, nrf, 1964.

——, *L'Imagination crœatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi*. Paris, 1958. Translated by Ralph Manheim as *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*. Princeton, 1969.

— —, 'Quiétude et inquiétude de l'âme dans soufisme de Ruzbihan Baqli de Shiraz' *Eranos Jahrbuch* 27 (1958).

——, *Sohrawardi d'Alep, fondateur de la doctrine illuminative (ishraqi)*. Paris, 1939.

— —, 'Sympathie et théopathie chez les fidèles d'amour en Islam'. *Eranos Jahrbuch* 24 (1955).

Danner, Victor, trans. *Ibn 'Aṭa'illah's Sufi Aphorisms (Kitab al-hikam)*. Leiden, 1973.

Darqawi, ad-, *Letters of a Sufi Master*. Translated by Titus Burkhardt. London, 1961.

Davis, F. Hadland. *The Persian Mystics: Jami*. Ca. 1908. Reprint. Lahore, n.d.

Digby, Simon. 'Encounters with Yogis in Indian Sufi Hagiography' Mimeographed. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, January, 1970.

Eaton, Richard M. *The Sufis of Bijapur*, Princeton University Press, 1978.

Ettinghausen, Richard. 'Persian Ascension Miniatures of the 14th Century.' Rome *Academia de Lincei*, 1957.

Faris, Nabih A. *The Book of Knowledge*. Lahore, 1962. Translation of a chapter of Ghazali's *Ihyā'*.

——. *The Foundation of the Articles of Faith*. Lahore, 1963. Translation of a chapter of Ghazāli's *Ihyā'*.

——. *The Mysteries of Almsgiving*. Beirut, 1966. Translation of Ghazzali's *Ihya'*.

Faruqi, Bashir Ahmad. *The Mujaddid's Conception of God*. Lahore, 1952. *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tauhid*. Lahore, 1940.

Gairdner, W. H. Temple. *Al-Ghazzali's 'Mishkāt al-anwār': The Niche for Lights*. London, 1915.

Gardet, Louis. Expériences mystiques en terres nonchrétiennes. Paris, 1953. 'La mention du nom divin, *dhikr*, dans la mystique musulmane'. *Revue Thomiste*, 1952–3.

Gibb, Sir Hamilton A. R. *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*. London, 1949.

Gilsenan, Michael. *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion*. Oxford, 1973.

Grunebaum, Gustave E. von. *Medieval Islam*, Chicago, 1953. 'The Place of Parapsychological Phenomena in Islam'. In *Malik Ram Felicitations* Volume I. Delhi, 1972.

Habib, Madeleine. 'Some Notes on the Naqshbandi Order'. *Moslem World* (59) (1969).

Haqq, Enamul. 'Sufi Movement in Bengal'. *Indo-Iranica* 3, Nos. 1–2 (1948).

Hasrat, Bikram Jit. *Dara Shikuh: Life and Works*. Calcutta, 1953.

Heer, Nicholas. 'A Sufi Psychological Treatise'. *Moslem World* 51 (1961).

Hujwiri, 'Ali ibn 'Uthman al-. *'The Kashf al-Mahjūb', the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism by al-Hujwiri*. Translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. Gibb Memorial Series, No. 17. 1911. Reprint. London, 1959.

Husaini, A. S. 'Uways al-Qarani and the Uwaysi Sufis', *Moslem World* 57, No. 2 (1967).

Ibn 'Arabi, Muhyī addīn. *Sufis of Andalusia: The Rūh al-quds and Al-Durrat al-fākhirah*. Translated by R. W. J. Austin. London, 1971.

——. *The 'Tarjumān al-ashwāq': A Collection of Mystical Odes by Muhyīu'ddīn ibn 'Arabi*. Edited and translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. London, 1911.

Iqbal, Muhammad. *Jawidname*. Translated into English by A. J. Arberry, London, 1966. (Italian, French, German and Turkish translations also available).

——. *Zabur-i 'ajam*. Lahore, 1927. Part translated by A. J. Arberry as Persian Psalms, Lahore, 1948.

Irāqī, Fakhruddin. *The Song of the Lovers ('ushshāqnāme)*. Edited and translated by A. J. Arberry. Oxford, 1939.

Izutsu, Toshihiko. *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts of Sufism and Taoism*. 2 vols. Tokyo, 1966–7. 'The Paradox of Light and Darkness in the Garden of Mystery of Shabastari'. In *Analogic Qualities of Literature*, Edited by Joseph P. Strelka. University Park, Pa. 1971.

Jurji, Edward Jabra, ed. and trans. *Illuminated in Islamic Mysticism*. Princeton, 1938.

Keddie, Nikki R. ed. *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Insitutions since 1500*. Berkeley, 1972.

Lings, Martin. *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century*. 2nd ed. London, 1971. Paperback, University of California, 1973.

Macdonald, Duncan Black. 'Emotional Religion in Islam as Affected by Music and Singing, Being a Translation of a Book of the *Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* of al-Ghazzālī', *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1901.

McKane, William. *Al-Ghazzali's Book of Fear and Hope*. Leiden, 1962.

Massignon, Louis. 'Le 'coeur' (al-qalb) dans la prière et la méditation musulmane'. *Etudes carmelitaines* 9 (1950).

——. *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*. Paris, 1928.

——. *La passion d'al-Hosayn ibn Mansour Al-Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam éxécuté à Bagdad le 26 Mars 922*. 2 vols. Paris, 1922. 2nd ed. 1976.

——.'Qissat Husayn al-Hallāj'. In *Donum Natalicum H. S. Nyberg*. Stockholm, 1954.

——. 'Salman Pak et les premices spirituelles de l'Islam iranien'. *Société des études iraniennes* 7 (1934).

Meier, Fritz. 'Der Derwischtanz'. *Asiatische Studien* 8 (1954). 'Das Problem der Natur im esoterischen Monismus des Islams'. *Eranos Jahrbuch* 14 (1946).

——. 'Qusayris Tartīb as-sulūk'. *Oriens* 16 (1963).

——. *Vom Wesen der islamischen Mystik. Basel, 1943.*

——. ed. *Die 'fawā'ih al-gamāl wa fawātih al-galāl' des Nagmuddīn al-Kubrā*. Wiesbaden, 1957.

Mir Valiuddin. *Love of God*. Hyderabad, Deccan, 1968.

Mohan Singh (Diwana). *Sikh Mysticism*. Amritsar, India.

Molé, Marijan. 'La Dance exstatique en Islam' *Sources orientales* 6 (1963).

——. *'Les Kubrawiyya entre sunnisme et shiisme'. Revue des études islamiques*, 1961.

——. *Les mystiques musulmans*, Paris, 1965.

Muktananda, Swami. *Chitshakti Vilas*. Translated as *The Play of Consciousness*. Ganeshpuri, India, 1972.

Nasr, Seyyed H. *Ideals and Realities of Islam*. London, 1966.

——. *Sufi Essais*, London, 1972.

——. *Three Muslim Sages*. Cambridge, Mass. 1963.

Nicholson, Reynold A. *The Idea of Personality in Sufism*. Cambridge, 1923.

——. *The Mystics of Islam*. 1914. Reprint. Chester Springs, Pa. 1962.

——. *Rumi: Poet and Mystic*. London, 1950.

——. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. 1921. Reprint. Cambridge, 1967.

——. *Tales of Mystic Mearing*. London, 1931.
——. ed. and trans. *Selected Poems from the 'Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz'*. 1898. Reprint. Cambridge, 1961.
Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad. *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid Ganj-i Shakar*. Aligarh, 1955.
——. 'Some Aspects of Khanqah Life in Medieval India'. *Studia Islamica* 8 (1957).
Nwyia, Paul, S. J. *Exegèse coranique et langage mystique*. Beirut, 1970.
——. *Ibn 'Abbād de Ronda*, Beirut, 1961.
——. *Ibn 'Aṭā Allah et la naissance de la confrèrie sadilite*. Beirut, 1972.
——. *Trois oeuvres inédites des mystiques musulmans: Saqīq al-Balhī, Ibn 'Aṭa, Niffarī*, Beirut, 1973.
Padwick, Constance E. *Muslim Devotions*. London, 1960.
Parsram, Jethmal. *Sufis of Sind*. Madras, 1924.
Qanungo, Kalika-Ranjan. *Dara Shukoh*. Calcutta, 1935.
Rahim, Abdar. 'Two Saints in Bengal: Shaikh Jalal ad-Din Tabrezi and Shah Jalal' *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 7 (1960).
Rahman, Fazlur. 'Dream Imagination, and 'ālam al-mithāl'. *Islamic Studies* 3–4 (1964–5). Also in *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. by Gustave E. von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois. Berkeley, 1966. *Islam*, London, 1966.
Ramakrishna, Lajwanti. *Punjabi Sufi Poets*. London & Calcutta, 1938.
Rasheed, Ghulam Dastgir. 'The Development of Na'tia Poetry in Persian Literature'. *Islamic Culture*, 1965.
Regnier, Yves. *Le 'divan' de Yunus Emre*, Paris, 1963.
Reinert, Benedikt. *Die Lehre vom tawakkul in der alteren Sufik*. Berlin, 1968.
Rice, Cyprian, O. P. *The Persian Sufis*. 2d ed. London, 1969.
Ritter, Hellmut. *Das Meer der Seele. Gott, Welt und Mensch in den Geschichten Fariduddin 'Attars*. Leiden, 1955.
——. 'Muslim Mystics' Strife with God'. *Oriens* 5 (1952).
Rumi, Maulana Jalaluddin. *Mathnawi-i ma'nawi*. Edited and translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. 8 vols. Gibb Memorial Series, n.s. 4 London, 1925–40.
——. *Diwan-i kabir ya Kulliyat-i Shams*. Edited by Badi 'uz-Zaman Faruzanfar. 10 vols. Teheran, 1957. In Persian.
——. *Fihi ma fihi*. Edited by 'Abdul Majid Daryabadi. Azamgarh, 1928. Edited by Badi'us-Zaman Furuzanfar. Teheran, 1959.
Sarraj, Abu. Nasr as-. *Kitab al-luma' fi't-taṣawwuf*. Edited by Reynold A. Nicholson. Gibb Memorial Series, No. 22, Leiden & London 1914. In Arabic.
Schaya, Léon. *La doctrine soufique de l'unité*. Paris, 1962.

Schimmel, Annemarie. 'Drei türkische Mystiker: Yunus Emre, Kaygusuz Abdal, Pir Sultan Abdal'. *Mitteilungen der Deutsch-Türkischen Gesellschaft*, no. 48 (1962).
——. *Dschelaladdin Rumi, Aus dem Diwan*. Stuttgart, 1964.
——, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*. Leiden, 1963.
——. *Al-Halladsch, Märtyrer der Gottesliebe*. Cologne, 1969.
——. 'Ibn Khafif, an Early Representative of Sufism'. *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, 1959.
—. 'The Influence of Sufism on Indo-Muslim Poetry'. In *Analogic Qualities of Literature*, ed. by Joseph P. Strelka. University Park, Pa. 1971.
——. 'The Martyr Mystic Hallaj in Sindhi Folk Poetry'. *Numen* 9, No. 3 (1962).
——, 'Maulana Rumi's Story on Prayer'. In *Yādnāme Jan Rypka*. Edited by Jiri Becka. Prague, 1967.
——. 'The Origin and Early Development of Sufism'. *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, 1958.
——. *Pain and Grace*. A story of two 18th century Muslim mystics in India, Leiden 1976.
——. *The Triumphal Sun*. The Life and Work of Mowlana Jalāloddin Rūmī, London, 1978.
——, 'Shah Inayat of Jhok: A Sindhi Mystic of the Early 18th Century'. in *Liber Amicorum in Honour of C. J. Bleeker*. Leiden, 1969.
——. 'Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer In Islam'. *Die Welt des Islams*, n.s. 2, No. 2 (1952).
——. 'The Veneration of the Prophet Muhammad, as Reflected in Sindhi Poetry'. In *The Saviour God*, edited by Samuel G. F. Brandon. Manchester, 1963.
——. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill, NC, 1975.
Schroeder, Eric. *Muhammad's People*. Portland, Maine, 1955.
Schuon, Frithjof. *Dimensions of Islam*. Translated by Peter N. Townsend, London, 1970.
——. *Understanding Islam*. Translated by D. M. Matheson. 3d ed. London, 1972.
Shabistari, Mahmud. *The Dialogue of the Gulshan-i Raz*. London, 1887.
——. *Gulshan-i Raz: The Rose-Garden of Mysteries*. Edited and translated by Edward Henry Whinfield. London, 1880.
——. *The Secret Garden*. Translated by Juraj Paska. New York & London, 1969.
Sharib, Zahur H. *The Life and Teachings of Khawaja Moinud-din Hasan Chishti*. Ajmer, 1959.
Shehadi, Fadlou. *Ghazali's Unique Unknowable God*. Leiden, 1964.
Smith, Margaret. *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*. London, 1935.
——. *Rabi'a the Mystic and Her Fellow Saints in Islam*. Cambridge, 1928.

——. *Readings from the Mystics of Islam*. London, 1950.
——. *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*. London, 1931.
——. *The Sufi Path of Love*. London, 1954.
Sorley, Herbert Tower. *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit: His Poetry, Life and Times*. 1940. Reprint. Oxford, 1966.
Subhan, John A. *Sufi Saints and Shrines*, Samuel Weiser, New York, 1974.
Suhrawardi, Shihabuddin 'Umar as-. *The "Awārif ul-Ma'ārif" written in the thirteenth century by Shaikh Shahabud-d-Din Umar bin Muhammad-i Sahrwardi*. Translated by H. Wilberforce Clarke. 1891. Reprint. New York, 1970.
Suhrawardi Maqtul. 'Le bruissement de l'aile de Gabriel'. Edited and translated by Henri Corbin and Paul Kraus. *Journal asiatique*, July, 1935.
Suleyman Celebi. *The Mevlidi Sherif by Suleyman Chelebi*. Translated by F. Lyman MacCallum. London, 1943.
Trimingham, J. Spencer. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. Oxford, 1971.
Walsh, John R. 'Yunus Emre: A Medieval Hymnodist'. *Numen* 7, Nos. 2–3 (1960).
Watt, W. Montgomery. *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*. London, 1953.
——. *A Study of Al-Ghazali*. Edinburgh, 1963.
Wilzer, Susanna, 'Untersuchungen zu Gazzāli's kitāb at-tauba'. *Der Islam* 32–3 (1955–7).
Zarrinkoob, A. H. 'Persian Sufism in Its Historical Perspective'. *Iranian Studies* 3, Nos. 3–4 (1970).
Zolondek, Leon, trans. *Book XX of al-Ghazali's 'Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn'*. Leiden, 1963.

archegos